



NATIONAL WIC ASSOCIATION

NWA Breastfeeding Strategic Plan

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 over 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 – ensuring the health of our children.

WIC serves over 9 million mothers and young children, over 1.5 million pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, over half of all America’s infants, one-quarter of its children 1–5 years of age.

Quality nutrition services are the centerpiece of WIC: nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion, education, and support, nutritious foods, and improved healthcare access for low and moderate income women and children with, or at risk of developing, nutrition-related health problems including overweight, obesity, and type-2 diabetes.

Families turning to WIC for nutrition assistance are vulnerable and at-risk. WIC food packages, including food packages 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 assure that WIC, as the nation’s premier public health nutrition program, will be recognized as a resource and advocate for breastfeeding promotion and support. **NWA** encourages all WIC programs to adopt the following breastfeeding strategic goals for their program.

Goal #1: Promote and Support exclusive breastfeeding for all mothers.

Objective #1: WIC agencies adopt the NWA 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 using the NWA Six Steps to Achieve Breastfeeding Goals for WIC Clinics.



NATIONAL WIC ASSOCIATION

NWA Breastfeeding Strategic Plan

Objective #2: NWA and WIC agencies will promote breastfeeding to other health care organizations/ 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 US.

Action #2: State WIC agencies will partner with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Chapter Breastfeeding Coordinator(s) and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) at the state level to promote consistent breastfeeding messages.

Objective #3: NWA and WIC agencies will promote breastfeeding in the community.

Action #1: WIC agencies will support and become active members of state/regional/local breastfeeding coalitions.

Action #2: WIC agencies will collaborate with other breastfeeding advocates to market the benefits of breastfeeding within communities.

Action #3: NWA and WIC agencies will recognize exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support efforts.

Goal #2: All WIC staff is knowledgeable/skilled in breastfeeding promotion and support.

Objective #1: WIC Agencies develop staff competencies appropriate to their role to promote and support breastfeeding.

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.

Objective #2: WIC staff and volunteers will gain competencies appropriate to their role in the program to promote and support breastfeeding.

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 training on an ongoing basis to support staff competencies.

Action #3: NWA will include breastfeeding topics/tracks in annual association conferences and nutrition and breastfeeding conferences.

Objective #3: The WIC agencies will increase the number of International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) at the local and state levels.

Action #1: WIC agencies will provide lactation-specific education opportunities to staff identified to become IBCLCs.

Action #2: WIC agencies will enable staff to obtain the required clinical experience necessary to complete certification.



NATIONAL WIC ASSOCIATION

NWA Breastfeeding Strategic Plan

Goal #3: WIC is recognized as a community resource for breastfeeding promotion and support.

Objective #1: WIC agencies will educate public health organizations, education institutions and community organizations about WIC's role in breastfeeding promotion and support.

Action #1: WIC agencies will encourage local agency visits to medical staff offices, schools, universities, and community organizations to share information on WIC's breastfeeding services and breastfeeding specific programs.

Action #2: WIC agencies will invite public health programs and other community groups to WIC breastfeeding in-services and trainings.

Action #3: WIC agencies will increase visibility of and promote the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program within the community.

Action #4: State agencies will collaborate with programs that provide prenatal, postpartum and infant health care at the local level to assure comprehensive breastfeeding promotion and support services.

Action #5: WIC agencies will plan collaborative breastfeeding events within communities.

Objective #2: WIC management will play 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 will advocate for the development and implementation of Federal/State/Local policies and procedures that protect, support and promote breastfeeding.

Objective #1: NWA and WIC agencies will work with Congress/State/Local government in passing legislation to protect and support women's rights to breastfeed.

Action #1: NWA and WIC agencies will provide input to Congress/State/Local government in developing breastfeeding promotion related legislation.

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 work place.

Objective #2: NWA and State WIC agencies will collaborate with USDA to develop and update policies and procedures that positively impact WIC 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.

NWA's mission: providing leadership to promote quality nutrition services; advocating for services for all eligible women, infants and children; and assuring the sound and responsive management of WIC.

Please direct all questions to NWA at 202-232-5492.



NATIONAL WIC ASSOCIATION

NWA Breastfeeding Strategic Plan

Action #3: State agencies will seek USDA grants and operational adjustment funds to support and enhance breastfeeding programs.

Action #4: NWA 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 breastfeeding data collection and reporting.

Objective #3: All WIC agencies will develop policies and procedures for establishing exemplary employee breastfeeding support programs and recognize those that are exemplary.

Action #1: WIC agencies will share policies and procedures that are proven successful in increasing employee breastfeeding rates.

Action #2: State agencies will recognize local agencies that successfully implement programs to increase employee breastfeeding rates.