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The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program was introduced in Louisiana in 1974. Tangipahoa and St. Helena parishes were among the first areas in the United States to participate, becoming the second and third regions to implement the program. During its initial year, WIC served 7,000 participants across 10 parishes in Louisiana, supported by \$804,300 in federal funds. These parishes included East Carroll, Ouachita, St. Landry, Acadia, DeSoto, Red River, Rapides, and West Feliciana. Mrs. Josephine Perkins of Amite was the first recipient of WIC benefits in the state.

Over the past five decades, the Louisiana WIC program has grown significantly.

Today, it serves nearly 95,000 participants while maintaining its core mission: to improve health outcomes, reduce disparities, and support nutrition security in Louisiana by providing healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to support services. These efforts are coordinated across a landscape of stakeholders, including healthcare providers, community organizations, and government agencies.

The success of the WIC program in Louisiana would not be possible without the vital support of its Vendor partners. Each year, WIC accounts for over \$70 million in nutritious foods provided by these Vendors. Their dedication and hard work are essential in ensuring that WIC participants have access to the resources they need for a healthy start in life.

*We  
thank  
you!*

## WIC Shopper Kiosk

Check out the latest innovation from LA WIC to simplify the in-store shopping experience! LA WIC deployed 20 WIC Shopper Kiosks in October 2023 to make shopping and identifying WIC-approved food items easier.

The WIC Shopper kiosk is equipped with an easy-to-use touchscreen display and a convenient barcode scanner. This innovation from LA WIC empowers WIC participants to navigate their shopping effortlessly. WIC shoppers can also browse recipes, scan the myWIC app QR Code, and more!

LA WIC will gather valuable data on scanned food items and participant redemption trends during this three-year pilot. We'll also seek feedback from Vendors and WIC shoppers to enhance the kiosk experience further.

WIC participants and families can find the WIC Shopper Kiosk in Regions 2, 3, 4, and 9. WIC shoppers can find a list of the participating Vendors on the [LouisianaWIC.org](https://LouisianaWIC.org) website. Vendors can dive deeper into its features by visiting the [LA WIC Vendor Hub](#) or clicking [here](#).

The WIC Shopper Kiosk is just one of the many ways LA WIC goals to improve the shopping experience for Vendors and WIC participants alike. If you are interested in participating in the WIC Shopper Kiosk pilot, please contact Danielle Hughes, at [Danielle.Hardges@la.gov](mailto:Danielle.Hardges@la.gov)



## LA WIC WISE SHOPPER

The Louisiana WIC program is launching the WISE (WIC In-Store Experience) Staff to improve the shopping experience for WIC participants. WISE Shoppers are trained WIC Staff who will assist WIC participants while they shop for their WIC benefits.

The goal is to make it easier for WIC families to maximize their benefits. WISE Staff will:

- Assist participants in finding and selecting WIC-approved items using tools like the myWIC app and Shopping List
  - Walk shoppers through the checkout process and understand receipts.
- WISE Shoppers will be deployed to stores in the Baton Rouge area first, then gradually expand to other regions statewide.

LA WIC will inform authorized WIC Vendors that a trained WISE Shopper will be on site to support WIC participants during their shopping trip before arriving and once onsite. WISE Staff will ask if they can set up a small table with a WIC banner to inform WIC participants about the in-store support.

LA WIC is eager to improve the shopping experience, making shopping for WIC benefits easier.

[VISIT OUR VENDOR HUB FOR LA WIC UPDATES](#)



## SPOTLIGHT

"Do the right thing even when you think no one is looking. It's called integrity" - unknown



Vendor Advisory Committee member Jessica Corzo recently received the Jefferson Parish Certificate of Merit for her service, dedication, and commitment to Jefferson Parish's Hispanic Community through her work with the Café con Leche breastfeeding support group.

## Jessica Corzo



*You are Awesome*

## Jessica Farris

We're thrilled to shine a spotlight on our new Program Manager 2, Jessica Farris, who has been an integral part of our Nutrition Operations team at BONS for 3.5 years. With a wealth of experience and dedication, Jessica has been instrumental in shaping our programs and ensuring their effectiveness.

## Lavonselle Longmyle

Lavonselle was recently appointed to Deputy Vendor Manager for the Vendor Operations Unit, where she serves as immediate back up to the Vendor Manager and contributes to strategic planning and administrative activities.

Lavonselle has been with the Vendor Operations Unit for over 8 years and has extensive experience in both the Monitoring & Outreach and Fraud & Investigations sections.

## Tracey Gibson

Tracy Gibson is the first WISE Shopper! Tracy will be supporting WIC Families by providing in-store assistance, helping them make the most of their benefits and navigating the shopping experience efficiently.

## Jacqueline Stapleton

Jacqueline Stapleton is a new Program Monitor with the Fraud and Investigation Team. She will aid in conducting Compliance Buys, Vendor Education Trainings, Inventory Audit Reviews and Routine Monitoring Reviews.

## 2024 LA WIC State Conference:

### "Celebrating 50 Years of WIC"



The Louisiana WIC State Conference, held in Shreveport from February 26th-29th, marked a momentous occasion – the 50th anniversary of the WIC program. During this event, the Vendor Operations Staff took center stage to present on two crucial initiatives: the LA WIC Shopper Kiosks and the Monday.com platform.

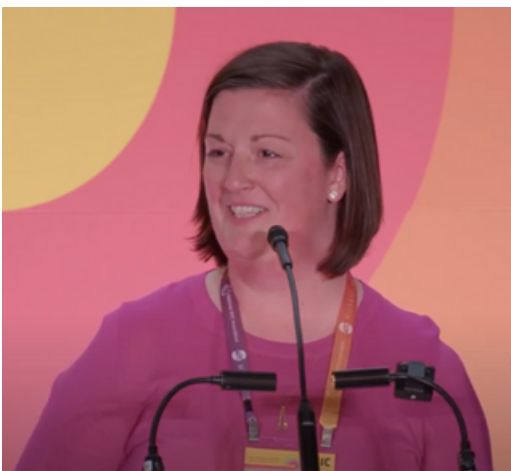
Danielle Hughes, Vendor Project Manager, delivered an insightful presentation on the WIC Shopper Kiosk. She provided attendees with a comprehensive overview of the kiosk's features, functionalities, and the valuable data it collects. This innovative tool has streamlined the shopping experience for WIC participants, enhancing program accessibility and efficiency.

Marian Schenck, Vendor Policy Planner, joined forces with Danielle to shed light on the versatile Monday.com platform, extensively utilized throughout the Bureau of Nutrition Services (BONS). Their presentation highlighted the platform's powerful functionalities, data collection capabilities, and automated notification systems. This powerful tool has revolutionized workflow management, enabling seamless collaboration and real-time updates across the bureau.

As the conference drew to a close, BONS Director Jennifer Nicklas expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated staff and Vendors who tirelessly support WIC participants. Her words resonated with the audience, underscoring the program's enduring commitment to promoting healthy families and communities.

The LA WIC State Conference not only celebrated a remarkable milestone but also showcased the program's unwavering dedication to innovation and continuous improvement, ensuring that WIC remains a vital resource for years to come.

## Association Update



### *Conference NWA Voting Members Elect Jennifer Nicklas as Chair Elect!*

The National WIC Association voting membership has elected Jennifer Nicklas as NWA's Chair Elect. Jennifer is the current State WIC Director of Louisiana, and the former Chair of NWA's State Section Standing Committee. Jennifer has experience working in WIC on both the local and state level, is a Registered Dietician and holds a Masters of Public Health. Jennifer's campaign for NWA Chair-Elect stressed her commitment to WIC and NWA, and focused on NWA member engagement as key to ensuring NWA continues to make strides towards our mission. Jennifer will serve as Chair-Elect for the 2024/2025 board term, and begin a two-year term as Chair of the Board of Directors in 2025/2026.

## Things to Remember



### Policy Updates Effective 10/1/2023

As a reminder, LA WIC updated its Policies for Federal Fiscal Year 2024, effective as of October 1, 2023. These policies can be found in the [LA WIC Policy Manual](#) and the [LA WIC Vendor Guide](#) on the [LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub](#). Please refer to the [memo](#) released September 15, 2023 for more details.

### Reauthorization

Authorized Vendors in Trade Area 2 must reapply for LA WIC Vendor authorization. Trade Area 2 includes all Vendors in Regions 6,7, & 8. **Reauthorization applications must be submitted between July 1- July 31.** All Vendors in Trade Area 2 were sent an email with instructions for reauthorization on June 03, 2024.

### Minimum Stock Requirements (MSR) Update Effective 10/01/2023

As a reminder, previously established Temporary MSR expired on September 30, 2023. As of October 1, 2023, LA WIC began using the Minimum Stock Requirements effective December 7, 2022 when assessing Vendors for compliance with LA WIC Vendor Rules and Regulations. Vendors must meet MSR at all times to be in compliance with LA WIC Vendors Rules and Regulations. The [Minimum Stock Requirements \(WIC-23\)](#), is required to be present in stores and can be found on the [LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub](#).

### Contact Information

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LA WIC Authorized Vendor Hub:

<http://ldh.la.gov/wicvendor>

### Upcoming Dates

June 19th - Office Closed

July 4th - Office Closed

September 2nd - Office Closed

November 5th - Office Closed

November 11th - Office Closed

November 28th - Office Closed

December 25th - Office Closed

### Join Our Mailing List

This newsletter will automatically be sent to the official corporate email address your store has on file with LA WIC, but you can [click here](#) to register additional email addresses to receive this newsletter directly.

