



# CLINIC LAGNIAPPE

Louisiana WIC's Clinic Staff Newsletter



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## IMPORTANT DATES

- August 1<sup>st</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>:  
National Breastfeeding Month
- September 15<sup>th</sup> –  
October 15<sup>th</sup> :  
Spanish Heritage Month
- October 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> :  
WIC Basics

## Welcome Back!

Leslie Lewis, Nutrition Operations Manager

Welcome back, clinics! It's a new fiscal year, a new school year, and an ending to curbside WIC services. As of August 10, 2023, WIC clinics must officially return to in-person services, as the USDA waivers that allowed for curbside services have ended. For many participants and WIC staff, curbside services may be the only WIC they have ever known, so this could be an unknown, scary, exciting and/or frustrating time. Please be patient!

Participants may have questions. Remind them that WIC is a health resource for them. Not only does WIC offer supplemental foods, but offering in-person services also allows for:

- Personalizing healthy food packages and referrals to other health services.
- Monitoring weights and heights for pregnant women, infants, and children to determine health status.
- Checking iron levels in women and children to determine health status.
- Providing nutrition education and counseling focused on participants family's health and eating habits.
- Sharing breastfeeding resources and support.

For staff who have only known curbside WIC services, we encourage you to brush up on your certification skills, particularly on collecting anthropometrics, providing nutrition education, and speaking face-to-face with participants and counseling to help them determine their goals. Please review the various trainings in the WIC LMS and utilize your regional nutritionist and State Agency for any questions that you may have and technical assistance that you may need.

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Finally, thank you again for all you do for Louisiana WIC. Participation has been the highest it has ever been since 2020, which shows that participants need WIC now more than ever, but it also shows you are super busy. We know there have been a lot of changes over the last year, and we appreciate your flexibility and open minds!

## CVB Update

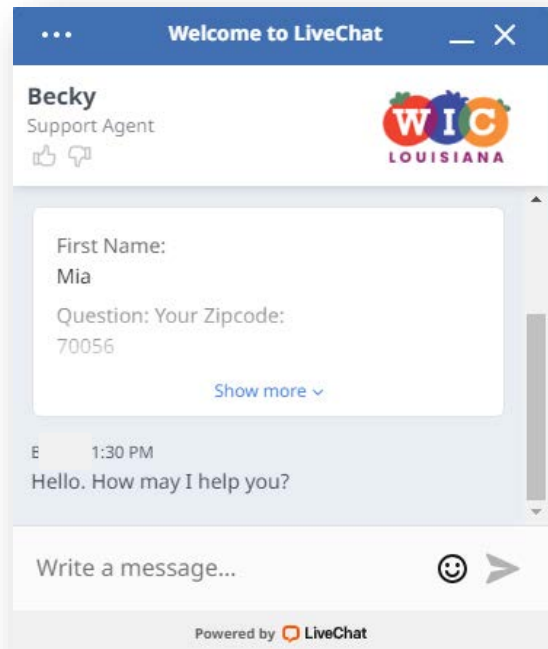
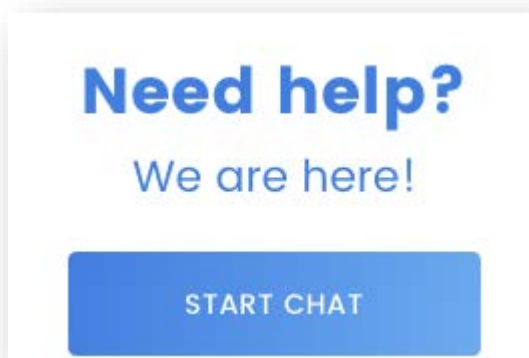
As a result of Coronavirus funding, Continuing Resolutions (CR) and CR Extensions, the Cash Value Benefit (CVB) has been at an enhanced value since 2021 and is currently set to expire September 30, 2023. At this time, Congress has not finalized a budget through the Agriculture Appropriations Bill for Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (FFY24). For this reason, the State Agency does not know the final CVB values for October 1, 2023 and beyond.

Until further notice, the CVB values for all Louisiana food packages have been updated to \$10/month for children, \$12/month for pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women and \$18/month for fully breastfeeding women-multiples with an effective date of **October 1, 2023**. All changes have been made in LAWIN so participants will start to see these changes on their food lists for **October and beyond**.

We hope we will get authorization to issue the CVB at enhanced levels for FFY24 and continue to monitor legislation closely. Participant handouts can be found on the first page of the Louisiana WIC website (or in English [here](#) and Spanish [here](#)).

## New LouisianaWIC.org Chatbot

You may have noticed the Chatbot at the bottom right hand corner of the Louisiana WIC website looks a little different! This is because we now have live operators from the American Pregnancy Association (APA) that can chat with participants during certain hours of the day. The hours of live operation are Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM-10:00 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM, and Sunday 12:00 PM-8:00 PM. If a participant uses the Chatbot outside of these hours, they are able to leave a message with their contact information, and an APA agent will contact them the following day.



## Celebrating Spanish Heritage Month

Rocio Hackney, Program Monitor

Mia Baker, Communications and Outreach Coordinator

Spanish Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the cultures, traditions, and histories of other American citizens whose ancestors come from the Spanish countries and areas of Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. September 15<sup>th</sup>, the first day of Spanish Heritage Month, holds significance as the anniversary of independence for the Spanish countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Additional independence days fall during this time as well, such as Mexico on September 16<sup>th</sup>, and Chile on September 17<sup>th</sup>.



In Guatemala, Independence Day is celebrated on September 15<sup>th</sup>. During the time of Spanish colonization, Guatemala was a Captaincy General and a part of New Spain, which is now Mexico. At a public meeting in Guatemala City on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1821, the Captaincy General of Guatemala, which included Chiapas, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras, officially declared its independence from Spain. This year will mark the 202<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of their independence!



A typical Guatemala Independence Day celebration features food, flags, fireworks, colorful parades, and torch-running where everyone in the community participates in activities. The day presents the perfect opportunity to experience the full splendor of Guatemalan culture.

The Louisiana WIC Program celebrates Spanish participants year round, not just during Spanish Heritage Month! State Agency staff have been working on improving our reach to and content for our Spanish-speaking participants. Here's some updates on what we've been doing, and some events coming up:

- Rocio completed two radio interviews for Tropical 105.7, a prominent Spanish Radio Station/Television Network that reaches New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas. In these interviews, she explained how the Louisiana WIC Program has resources both in-person and online for our Spanish participants.
- The Louisiana WIC website is being translated into a separate Spanish page, where Spanish speaking participants can find resources more easily and efficiently.
- Mia and Rocio will be attending a Spanish Heritage Month Health Fair at the end of September!



Sources: [hispanicheritagemoth.gov](http://hispanicheritagemoth.gov), [spanishmarks.com](http://spanishmarks.com), [nationaltoday.com](http://nationaltoday.com)



## National Breastfeeding Month and Cheers for Peers

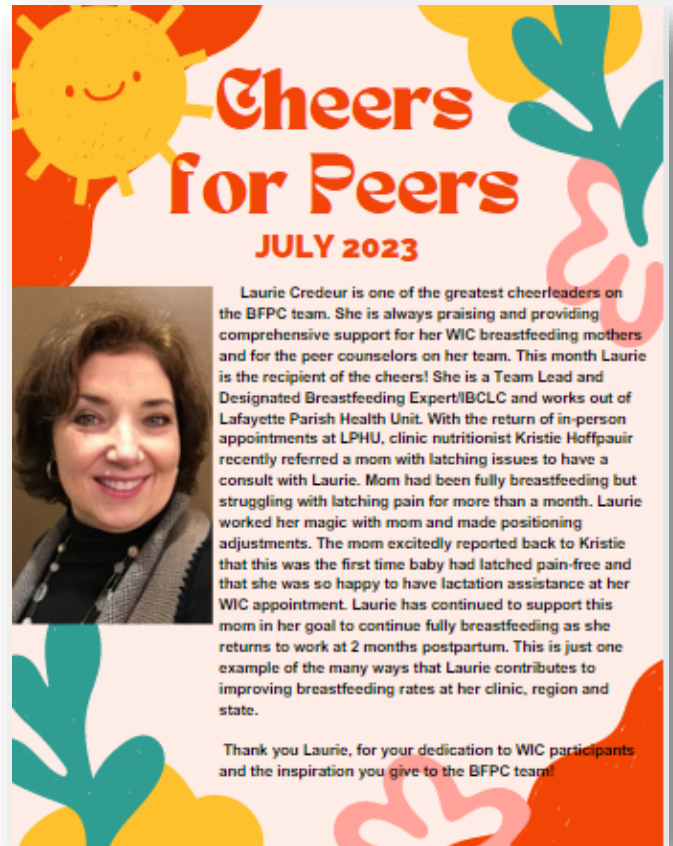
Tara Landry, Breastfeeding Program Manager

This year's World Breastfeeding (WBF) Week/Month theme is **Enabling Breastfeeding: Making a difference for working parents**. The United States Breastfeeding Committee National BF Month Theme is: **This is Our Why**. The goal is to help shine a light on why this work is so important and center the conversation on the babies and families who need our support. Both themes center on improving working conditions in support of breastfeeding individuals.

Workplace challenges remain the most common reason for women to never breastfeed or stop breastfeeding earlier than recommended. The Louisiana WIC Program supports our breastfeeding families. The WBF Month infographic explains how WIC helps breastfeeding parents in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

The following links include more information on recently passed legislation to support working nursing parents:

- PUMP Act: Effective December 2022 **PUMP Act Explainer: [PUMP-Act-Explainer.pdf](#)** ([worklifelaw.org](http://worklifelaw.org))
- PWFA Act: Effective June 27, 2023: [What You Should Know About the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(eoc.gov\)](#)



Click [here](#) for July Cheers for Peers.

## Policy Corner

Cathy Daniels, Policy and Evaluation Manager

### **Chapter 9.10 Income Eligibility (Not Adjunctive)**

For applicants who do not have adjunct eligibility, the definition of current income has changed to allow more flexibility for the applicant. The new definition of current income is the most recent available proof of 28-31 consecutive days' worth of income received by the household.

It is important to note that there are multiple things to consider when establishing current income: 1) the date of pay stub(s) that cover 28-31 days, and 2) the most recent pay stub must not be dated more than 30 days prior to the documentation submission date **or** the first certification appointment. Other methods of calculating income, such as annual current income when an applicant's family income fluctuates (in the case of maternity leave or teachers paid during the school year) still apply. For more details, refer to Policy Chapter 9.10 in the online library or the July 2023 Webinar series: Streamlining Certification, USDA Flexibilities, and Policy Reminders, located in Coursemill Learning Management System.

## Vendor News: Raydiant Kiosks

Vendor Ops Team

To enhance the WIC shopping experience for both WIC participants and vendors, Louisiana WIC is pleased to introduce the innovative Raydiant kiosk. This state-of-the-art solution aims to streamline the shopping process while increasing awareness of the WIC Program and its benefits. The Raydiant kiosk will modernize the way WIC shoppers use their benefits in the store.

To kick start this exciting initiative, Louisiana WIC is planning a pilot program involving approximately 20 stores statewide. We extended invitations to local stores to participate in this opportunity and be among the first to provide WIC shoppers with this innovative technology.

**“Your Child Has You, and You Have WIC.”**



## Farmer's Market Nutrition Program in Full Swing

Patty Abraham, Nutrition Education/Exempt Formula/WIC Farmers Market Manager

The purpose of the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is to improve the health of WIC families and encourage the purchase of locally grown fresh fruit, vegetables and cut herbs directly from farmers. FMNP was established by Congress in 1992 to expand the awareness, use of, and sales at farmers markets. 40 WIC clinics across the state and over 3,600 FMNP cards have been sent to participating clinics since the program started on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Clinics must issue their cards before **October 1<sup>st</sup>**, and participants have until **November 30<sup>th</sup>** to redeem their benefits. WIC participants who are 4 months and older receive \$30 for the season.



This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year that electronic cards are being used rather than paper vouchers. Farmers must display the yellow vendor sign shown above and post prices of produce for sale.

Visit: [WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program \(FMNP\) - WIC Louisiana \(louisianawic.org\)](https://www.louisianawic.org) for the:

- List of participating clinics.
- Directory of approved farmers markets and roadside stands that can accept FMNP benefit cards.
- Regional handouts listing farmers markets and roadside stands by location and hours (also found in the WIC Library).

If your clinic did not participate this year but is interested in participating next year, emails to sign-up will be sent out in early spring 2024 – keep an eye out!

## BDT Project Closeout

As many of you know, we have been working with Benefits Data Trust (BDT) since December 2021 to reach families enrolled in Medicaid with children ages 0-4 that are not enrolled in, but qualify for, Louisiana WIC. This project involved sending text messages to these families in order to encourage them to apply for the Louisiana WIC Program. This project came to a close in July 2023, after almost a year and a half of time and effort from both BDT and BONS staff. Here are the results of the text messaging campaign:

**3,440**  
**Caregivers**  
scheduled issuance/  
certification  
appointments

**2,363**  
**Caregivers**  
completed issuance/  
certification  
appointments

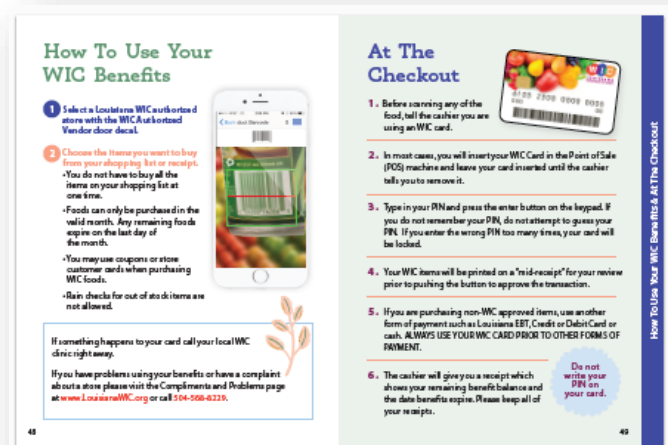
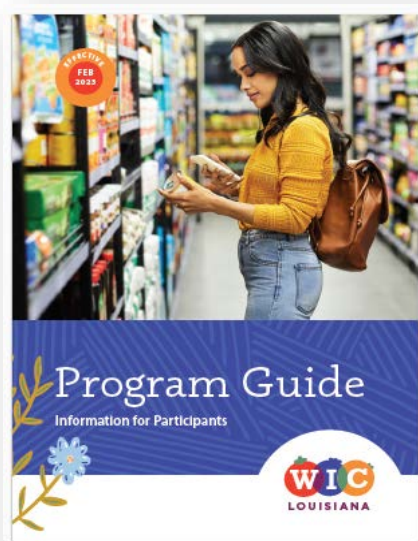
**1,657**  
**Families**  
received WIC  
benefits

Thank you to all clinic staff that assisted with this project. We could not have done it without you!

## Louisiana WIC 2023 NEW Program Guide

All clinics should have ordered and received an updated Louisiana WIC 2023 New Program Guide from Brush Art! The updated Program Guide highlights recently added food items along with our newest tech feature, the myWIC MOSAIC App.

It's important to properly discard the old Program Guides along with the Food Addendum 1 Pager so we are sharing the most up-to-date information as possible. Also, for the incoming forms order, please note that the Food Addendum 1 Pager will not be printed even if it was ordered since it's no longer relevant.



## Staffing Updates

### Farewell Natalie!



Help us extend a heartfelt farewell to our Louisiana WIC Vendor Program Manager, Natalie Istre. Natalie has been with WIC since July 2019, and she has lead the Vendor Team through countless WIC challenges and hurdles. Her last day with the WIC Program will be August 25<sup>th</sup>. Natalie, we are grateful for your leadership and wish you luck in your future endeavors. You will be missed!

In the meantime, please email [lawicvendor@la.gov](mailto:lawicvendor@la.gov) and [Jennifer.Nicklas@la.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Nicklas@la.gov) with any vendor questions.

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## Clinic Spotlight

### Congratulations 2023 Graduates!

Two WIC CPA's from Region 2 have completed their Master's Degrees in May 2023

**Shelly Jackson, MS, RDN, LDN** – Shelly works as the CSHS Dietitian at the East Baton Rouge Parish Health Unit, and she provides High Risk Nutrition counseling at the Pointe Coupee Parish Health Unit and Iberville Parish Health Unit. She received her Master's Degree in Health Sciences from Cedarcrest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

**Alesha Murphy, MS** – Alesha works as a Health Educator at the Iberville Parish Health unit, and she received her Master's Degree in Food Safety from Johnson and Wales University.



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## Contribute to the Newsletter!

Clinic Lagniappe is the perfect place to share information. We want to know what is going on in your region and local clinic. If you're interested in submitting content for the newsletter, please email [Mia.Baker@la.gov](mailto:Mia.Baker@la.gov)

## Join Our Mailing List

This newsletter will automatically be sent to Regional Nutritionists to share with WIC Clinic Managers. WIC Staff may also sign-up to receive this newsletter directly by registering. If you would like to join the **WIC Clinic Lagniappe** mailing list, [click here](#).

## We Want Your Feedback!

We'd love to hear from you! Send us your thoughts, comments, and suggestions. [CONTACT US](#)

