



## GROWING HEALTHY FUTURES

### The Social Determinants Impacting the Health of Oregon WIC Families



In March of this year, we asked you to take a survey about referrals you make to participants for services outside the scope of WIC. 87 of you responded. Thank you! The results provided us with insights on the needs you hear from families, how you make referrals, and what you know of your local Community Action Agency (CAA) and their services.

This survey was part of a larger project in determining how Oregon WIC is addressing the **social determinants of health** of our participants. The social determinants of health, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), are “the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.”

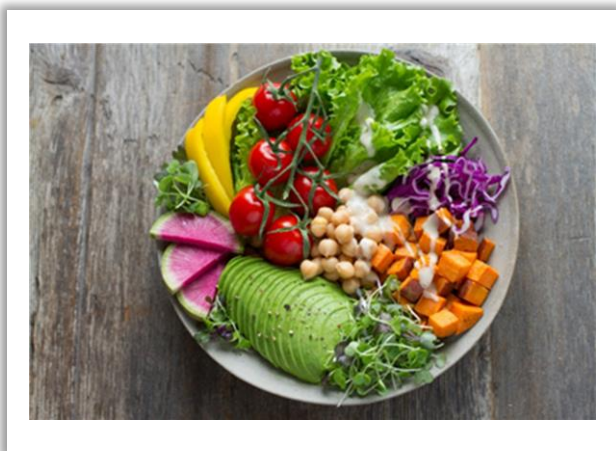
From the survey responses, we learned that many staff aren’t familiar with their CAA. CAAs are a national network of social service agencies that were founded in 1964 as a part of President Johnson’s “War on Poverty.” To learn more about the 18 CAAs in Oregon, visit [Community Action Partnership of Oregon’s website](#).

Overall, our survey told us that child care, additional food resources, housing assistance, transportation, and homeless shelters were the top services you hear WIC families identify as a need. After interviewing CAA staff, we learned that there is an overlap between these needs and the services CAAs provide. As a result, we have an opportunity to strengthen collaboration to better support WIC participants. On the right sidebar is a hyperlinked list of the CAAs in Oregon. Take a moment to familiarize yourself with their services and reach out to determine a good point of contact for referrals. For more information about this project contact Julie Reeder. Many thanks to Azalea Thompson for all her efforts on this project!

#### Oregon Community Action Agencies

- [ACCESS](#) (Jackson County)
- [Clackamas County Social Services Division](#) (Clackamas County)
- [Community Action Organization](#) (Washington County)
- [Community Action Program of East Central Oregon](#) (Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, and Wheeler Counties)
- [Community Action Team](#) (Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook Counties)
- [Community Connection of NE Oregon](#) (Baker, Grant, Union, and Wallowa Counties)
- [Community in Action](#) (Harney and Malheur Counties)
- [Community Services Consortium](#) (Benton, Lincoln, and Linn Counties)
- [Klamath Lake Community Action Services](#) (Klamath and Lake Counties)
- [Lane County Human Services Division](#) (Lane County)
- [Mid-Columbia Community Action Council](#) (Hood River, Sherman, and Wasco Counties)
- [Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency](#) (Marion and Polk Counties)
- [Multnomah County Department of County Human Services](#) (Multnomah County)
- [NeighborImpact](#) (Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties)
- [Oregon Coast Community Action Agency](#) (Coos and Curry Counties)
- [Oregon Human Development Corporation](#) (farmworkers statewide)
- [United Community Action Network](#) (Douglas and Josephine Counties)
- [Yamhill Community Action Partnership](#) (Yamhill County)

## I'm glad you asked: Is it safe to be vegan during pregnancy and while breastfeeding?



Great question. As you may know, folks follow vegan, or plant-based diets for many reasons that may be personal, medical or cultural. When looking at the impact of a vegan diet, recent literature and research provides further context and information. According to the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#), inadequate levels of protein, iron, folic acid, vitamin D, calcium, iodine, omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin B12 have been shown to predispose the child to chronic conditions later in life, such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and neurodevelopmental delays. Vegans and vegetarians are at risk for some of these deficiencies, depending on their diets.

A plant-based diet can be appropriate during pregnancy, but it must be well planned in order to provide all the energy requirements and meet critical nutrients, such as protein, fiber, omega-3, fatty acids, zinc, iodine, calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B12. Bottom line: Current evidence indicates that well-balanced vegetarian and vegan diets are considered safe for the mother's health during pregnancy and for both mother and baby while breastfeeding. For further reading here is [a recent research article](#), an article from the [New York Times](#) and an article from [Harvard's Nutrition Source](#) discussion about sustainability along with a sample 7 day meal plan.

### Shopping Tip



#### With WIC benefits, is oatmeal a cereal or a whole grain?

- Oats in a box, bag, or tub are a whole grain benefit
- Instant oatmeal in single-serving packets are a cereal benefit

### "I couldn't buy this... Oat/Oatmeal"

Oatmeal cereal and whole grain oats continue to be a source of confusion for WIC shoppers. Page six of the [WIC Food List](#) provides the following explanation.

Yet, shoppers continue to submit "I couldn't buy this" emails via the WICShopper app saying that an Oat product scanned as eligible with the app but wouldn't go through at the register. As a reminder, oats that are in a box, bag or tub count towards the whole grain benefit. Instant oatmeal in a single serving packs are a cereal benefit.

**Here's what you can do:** while providing shopper education highlight the differences between oatmeal cereal (single packets) and whole grain oats (tubs, boxes or bags).

## Interview with Shannon Flowerday

Deschutes County, Certifier with an IBCLC, WIC Mentor



### What do you enjoy most about your work with WIC?

First my co-workers are amazing, and they are like family to me. It makes it a joy to come to work. Helping mom's with breastfeeding is my passion, and I am lucky to be able to do that every day at WIC.

### Tell us a little bit about your journey advocating for breastfeeding education and promotion.

I started my work with WIC in 2005 as a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor. I was a WIC mom with 3 kids under 6. My breastfeeding experience was different with each child. My youngest started out in the NICU, and I went on to breastfeed her for 18 months. This experience made me sad for all the moms that don't have support with their breastfeeding goals. Through my education as a peer counselor, and amazing mentors along the way I learned so much more about breastfeeding, and how to support mom's in meeting their goals. I became an IBCLC in 2011. My role as an IBCLC in WIC is extremely rewarding. I love providing moms with the support they need through prenatal breastfeeding education, and one on one support after they have their babies. I also enjoy our partnership with the Central Oregon Breastfeeding Coalition. This last week we had a booth for families to feed and change their babies in at the Balloons Over Bend Children's Festival (See picture).

**What's something you do for fun outside of WIC?** I love hiking on the weekends with my dog! We recently did the Green Lakes trail here in Central Oregon. We are lucky to have so many beautiful trails right in our own backyard.

## Getting R.E.A.D.Y. for mealtimes

Learn more from a [blog by Jo Cormack](#)

Remember **R.E.A.D.Y.** when helping a child transition to mealtime from another activity.

- **Rituals** - make a familiar routine to help prepare for mealtime.
- **Engagement** - connect to the child.
- **Activity planning** - being mindful of what your child is doing in the time before the meal.
- **Count Down** - an alternative to springing the transition on your child.
- **You choose** - provide a manageable choice to the child.

**Note:** Jo Cormack is a registered counselor from the UK who specializes in the psychological aspects of feeding.



## Updated Fish Advice

FDA announced [updated advice](#): about eating fish for women who are or might become pregnant, breastfeeding women, and young children. The advice about how much fish to eat based on the mercury level hasn't changed, but it now highlights the important role eating fish plays in the diet.

Take a look on Shopify:

- [Advise about eating fish \(FDA\)](#)
- [Oregon Fish and Seafood Guide \(English\)](#)
- [Oregon Fish and Seafood Guide \(Spanish\)](#)