



STATEWIDE MEETING 2026

WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to our Statewide WIC Meeting!

I know it has been a long time since we have been able to gather as a group, and the State WIC Program hopes you can use this time to gather together to connect, learn, and network with WIC staff from across the state. As you do, we hope it will reinvigorate your passion for the work you do for families across Oregon.

I cannot express my appreciation enough for every single person who works to support WIC's mission and vision across Oregon. The impact you make is beyond measure. Its importance cannot be overstated. It is also difficult and draining work that can lead to burnout and compassion fatigue. Please take these two days to help refill your cup and celebrate yourself, your peers, and your work.

During our time together, we hope you will take time to share innovative practices, ideas, success stories between agencies. In addition to that, we hope you will take away helpful tips from the presenters, covering topics such as:

- become more comfortable with motivational interviewing in short, remote, and texting conversations
- use words effectively through plain language
- understand the power of our words when speaking with WIC participants
- building empathy, compassion, and understanding while working across cultures
- breastfeeding peer counseling expansion across the state
- supporting participants with substance use

I admire and appreciate you all. The State WIC staff and I look forward to connecting in person with as many people as possible over the next two days!

Much Aloha,

Tiare T Sanna MS, RDN

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MEETING DETAILS

REGISTRATION DESK

Our registration desk is being staffed by the team from Class Act Events. Please stop by with questions, to sign up for the lactation room, access the Quiet Room, or with any question you may have.

PHOTOS

There will be a photo booth available on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 in the lobby! Please take a minute to stop by with friends - old and new – for some fun photos. Props will be provided. The photo fun will continue on Thursday with props available for you to take photos with your cell phone to remember the event. Please remember to consider others in the photo before posting to social media.

PARKING

Parking at the Holiday Inn Columbia Riverfront is free.

LACTATION ROOM

There is a dedicated Lactation Room available. Please stop by the registration desk for details about how to sign up to use the room, receive the code, and more. The lactation room is located behind the hotel registration desk. See the Hotel Map on page 32.

BABIES IN ARMS

Babies in arms are welcome at the meeting. Please keep in mind even happy baby noises may distract others in sessions.

QUIET ROOM

This year we are pleased to offer a quiet room.

This space is for any conference attendee who needs:

- A moment of quiet to decompress
- A low-stimulus environment to regulate senses
- A calm place to rest, meditate, or reset between sessions

Quiet activities like coloring and puzzles will be provided. It is not intended for meetings, socializing, or extended conversations. The quiet room is room 202. Come to the registration desk for access.

CELL PHONES

Please set your cell phone to silent for all notifications. If you need to take a call please answer after leaving the room.

SESSION HANDOUTS

Speaker slides will be posted on the Statewide Meeting web page as soon as they are available. Printed handouts for activities will be provided to those attending the session and on the statewide meeting site after the meeting.

EVALUATIONS

We have set up electronic evaluations for each session and the conference overall. QR codes are in this conference program and will be available in each session as well. Sharing your thoughts is a great gift to the conference planning team and the speakers. Hearing from you is how we learn what works, and what does not!

ACTIVITIES IN THE REGISTRATION AREA

Don't forget to check out the activities in the conference registration area. Show off your skills by participating in the Breast Pump challenge! (there are prizes!) Other opportunities include the Photo booth, chatting with the team from BrushArt when they are not in session, and stopping by the Shopper Education table.

MILEAGE AND MEAL REIMBURSEMENT

Mileage and meal reimbursement forms are in your conference packet or can be picked up in the registration area. If you are eligible for mileage or meal reimbursement, please complete the form and leave it in the designated spot in the registration area on your last day. If you attend one day, please submit the form before you leave.

Please note: pay attention to the mailing address for payment.

- If you used your personal vehicle and paid for your dinner using your own funds, please enter your home address to receive the check. It will be mailed directly to you.
- If you drove a county vehicle or received a pre-paid card from your agency, check with your coordinator before submitting a mileage or meal reimbursement form.

Please submit your form before leaving the conference.

AGENDA

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2026

1:00pm-4:00pm

Timberline OWCA Meeting

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2026

7:15am-8:00am

Lobby Meet for a morning walk

7:30am-8:30am

Registration area Continental Breakfast is available for those on overnight travel status

8:30am-9:30am

Salon 3 LAWN

Salon 2 Breastfeeding Coordinator Meeting

9:45am-11:15am

Grand Ballroom Welcome and Roll Call
Keynote: Winning Hard
Monica Smith, MA, LPC, RDN

11:30am-12:30pm Lunch

Grand Ballroom Guest Speaker: Naomi Adeline-Biggs, MBBS. MPH
Public Health Director, Public Health Division, Oregon Health Authority

12:45pm-2:15pm

Breakout Session 1

East Salon

Motivational Interviewing for Short and Remote Conversations

Salon 3

The Future of Prenatal Breastfeeding Education

Weyerhaeuser

Disability Access, Inclusion, and Anti-Ableism in Our Work
(Limit 30)

Salon 2

From Conversation to Connection: Using Motivational Interviewing with Digital WIC Resources

Registration area

Shopper Education Experience
(Limit 30)

2:30pm-4:00pm

Breakout Session 2

East Salon

Motivational Interviewing for Short and Remote Conversations

Crown Zellerbach

Who Do I Want To Be In This Moment? Navigating Volatile Situations Without Compromising Your Values
(Limit 30)

Salon 2

From Conversation to Connection: Using Motivational Interviewing with Digital WIC Resources

Salon 3

Mandatory Reporting for WIC: Keeping Children and Families Safe, Supporting Families and WIC Staff

AGENDA

4:15pm-5:15pm

Grand Ballroom

Journey Mapping the WIC Participant Experience

5:15pm-6:15pm

Registration area

Grab a bite and connect!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2026

7:15am-8:00am

Wake up with Wellness

See Hotel Map

Walk along the river
Pickleball

7:15am-8:15am

Registration area

Continental Breakfast is available for those on overnight travel status

8:30am-10:00am

Breakout Session 3

Salon 3

Building Empathy Across Cultures with Motivational Interviewing

Salon 2

Substance Use Protecting Children, Supporting Families

East Salon

Evolving Breastfeeding Support: Insights from Peer Counseling Panel Discussion

Weyerhaeuser

Plain Language Essentials for WIC
(Limit 30)

Registration area

Shopper Education Experience
(Limit 30)

10:15am-11:45am	Breakout Session 4
Salon 3	Building Empathy Across Cultures with Motivational Interviewing
Salon 2	Substance Use Protecting Children, Supporting Families
East Salon	Feeding Your Gut Garden: Ultra Processed Foods and the Gut Microbiome
Weyerhaeuser	The Power of Our Words (Limit 30)
Crown Zellerbach	Crafting Your Calm (Limit 30)
12:00pm-1:00pm	Lunch
Grand Ballroom	Breastfeeding Awards of Excellence
1:15pm-2:15pm	Sharing and Networking
See Session Descriptions for location	Local Agency Networking Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Networking
2:30pm-3:30pm	Closing Session
Grand Ballroom	Stacy Davis, National WIC Association

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

WINNING HARD

MONICA SMITH

Grand Ballroom

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

10:15-11:15



[Winning Hard Evaluation](#)

Serving our communities and caring for our country's most valuable resource, the families and children that are our future, isn't all daisies and kittens. It has taken 50+ years of dedication, endless resiliency, advocacy, and at times, very hard work. In this session we look at the depth and cost of WIC's success along with strategies that can help continue the success without taking undo toll on the folks that make WIC the most successful public health program in America's history.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING FOR SHORT AND REMOTE CONVERSATIONS

ARIEL SINGER

East Salon

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

12:45pm-2:15pm

2:30pm-4:00pm



[Motivational Interviewing
for Short and Remote
Conversations Evaluation](#)

WIC certifiers and nutrition educators bring real MI skills to their work — but applying those skills in short appointments, over the phone, or via text and email creates distinct challenges. Without nonverbal cues, even experienced staff can sound stilted or overly scripted, and the pace of WIC appointments leaves little room to course-correct.

This 90-minute interactive session is designed specifically for WIC's hybrid communication environment. Participants will explore how to adapt core OARS skills when working remotely or asynchronously, practice writing affirmations and reflections that sound natural rather than canned, and build confidence asking deeper follow-up questions — particularly during the mid-certification and nutrition education appointments and for peer counseling.

Using a role-play format — including the “threesomes with an observer” practice structure — participants will build confidence in short, high-stakes conversations. They will leave with practical language and frameworks drawn from real WIC interactions that they can apply immediately.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

THE FUTURE OF PRENATAL BREASTFEEDING EDUCATION

KELLY DURBIN, IBCLC

Salon 3

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

12:45pm-2:15pm



[The Future of Prenatal Breastfeeding Education Evaluation](#)

The common format of prenatal breastfeeding education, frequently titled “The Basics of Breastfeeding,” is outdated and insufficient to meet the needs of today’s families. The landscape of childbirth and breastfeeding has evolved dramatically over the last two decades, and prenatal education must change to include realistic information beyond the basics.

This session explores how to adapt course delivery through new technologies and addresses how to include circumstances that are often ignored in traditional prenatal courses. We will analyze the core strengths of the WIC model that make it uniquely positioned to support modern families, while identifying key opportunities to develop and integrate new educational features.

Additionally, we will discuss current research on innovations in teaching, look at the growth and expansion of tech in this space, and examine new laws that could shift our approach to education even before pregnancy begins. Finally, we will also examine ways to expand our teaching and breastfeeding support partnerships in the community to deliver robust prenatal breastfeeding education.

FROM CONVERSATION TO CONNECTION: USING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING WITH DIGITAL WIC RESOURCES

**JAKE BRUSH
AMANDA HOJNACKI
STEPHANIE WEIS**

Salon 2

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

12:45pm-2:15pm

2:30pm-4:00pm

Every WIC interaction is an opportunity to inspire healthy behavior change, but meaningful conversations don’t have to end when the appointment does.

This interactive session explores how motivational interviewing techniques can be paired with Oregon WIC’s digital nutrition education resources (oregon.wicresources.org) to extend participant support beyond the clinic. Attendees will learn

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

FROM CONVERSATION TO CONNECTION: USING MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING WITH DIGITAL WIC RESOURCES (CONT.)

JAKE BRUSH
AMANDA HOJNACKI
STEPHANIE WEIS

Salon 2

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

12:45pm-2:15pm

2:30pm-4:00pm



[From Conversation
to Connection: Using
Motivational Interviewing
with Digital WIC Resources
Evaluation](#)

practical strategies for incorporating trusted online resources into participant-centered counseling during in-person, text, and email interactions.

Through real-world examples and guided scenarios, attendees will practice identifying participant priorities, asking open-ended questions, eliciting change talk, and using digital education materials to reinforce conversations while respecting participant readiness and autonomy.

The session will also highlight features that make Oregon WIC's digital resources easy to integrate into daily practice, including mobile-friendly webpages, the ability to quickly share content through text or email, and age-specific education that participants can revisit whenever questions arise.

Rather than simply providing information, attendees will discover how digital resources can become an extension of motivational interviewing – supporting families between appointments, encouraging self-directed learning, and strengthening confidence to make small, achievable changes over time.

Attendees will leave with practical counseling techniques, communication prompts, and tools they can immediately use to create more engaging, participant-centered nutrition education experiences while helping families access trusted information whenever and wherever they need it.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

DISABILITY ACCESS, INCLUSION, AND ANTI ABLEISM IN OUR WORK

DAVID KENNEDY-WONG
ISA MEAS VASQUEZ
IAN JAQUISS, JD

Weyerhaeuser
Wednesday, August 26, 2026
12:45pm-2:15pm

Learn about and discuss best practices for accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities, and strategies toward an anti-ableist culture.



[Disability Access, Inclusion,
and Anti Ableism in Our
Work Evaluation](#)

WIC SHOPPER EXPERIENCE

OREGON WIC

Registration Area
Wednesday, August 26, 2026
12:45PM-2:15PM
Thursday, August 27, 2026
8:30am-10:00am

Experience what it's like for WIC participants to use their benefits at a real store! State WIC staff will be on hand for this offsite activity at the Hayden Island Target. You will have an opportunity to use a wide variety of WIC shopping resources and an eWIC card to find and purchase WIC-approved foods to donate to the Oregon Food Bank. Transportation to and from this event is available if needed, please reserve a seat when you register.



Signing up prior to the event is required.
This activity is limited to 30 people per session.

[WIC Shopper Experience Evaluation](#)

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

WHO DO I WANT TO BE IN THIS MOMENT? NAVIGATING VOLATILE SITUATIONS WITHOUT COMPROMISING YOUR VALUES

MONICA SMITH

Crown Zellberbach
Wednesday, August 26, 2026
2:30pm-4:00pm



[Who Do I Want To Be In
This Moment? Navigating
Volatile Situations Without
Compromising Your Values
Evaluation](#)

How do you handle uncomfortable situations? Do you avoid conflict? What happens when “that person” walks through the door of your clinic and you just know something is going to go wrong? This presentation aims to help you navigate tough situations without becoming part of the problem. At the end of a long day, if your goal is to go home feeling good about how you did your job, and how you represented yourself and your values...this workshop is for you.

This workshop is highly encouraged for staff who meet people at the front desk or answer phones.

Limited to 30 people.

NAVIGATING MANDATORY REPORTING IN YOUR WORK

JUSTINE KOVAK
MICHAELA COGLINAESE

Salon 3
Wednesday, August 26, 2026
2:30pm-4:00pm

This presentation aims to empower participants by increasing their awareness and knowledge of child maltreatment response and prevention. Child maltreatment encompasses different types of abuse, neglect, and adversity that are common, impactful, costly and preventable. Child and family serving professionals like WIC staff are often exposed to abuse disclosures, families experiencing adversity, and vulnerable children. They are also exposed to hope and resilience, and are participating in abuse prevention through their work! Beyond a responsibility to report concerns of abuse, WIC staff have opportunity to support families, contribute to safety, and increase resilience.

NAVIGATING MANDATORY REPORTING IN YOUR WORK (CONT.)

JUSTINE KOVAK
MICHAELA COGLINAESE

Salon 3

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

2:30pm-4:00pm



[Navigating Mandatory
Reporting in Your Work
Evaluation](#)

This presentation will broadly review types of child maltreatment and how concerns are typically identified. Child maltreatment is not caused by a single factor. Instead, a combination of factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels can increase or decrease the risk of abuse or neglect. This presentation will review risk and protective factors impacting child maltreatment and identify opportunities for resilience. While organizations and systems like Child Advocacy Centers and Child Abuse Multidisciplinary Teams are designated to respond to child abuse concerns, family serving agencies play an important role in supporting child wellbeing. This presentation will provide an overview of those systems, while identifying ways that other child and family serving professionals can contribute to child safety.

Supporting families impacted by abuse or trauma poses challenges for the helping professional. Resilience is also a necessary part of doing—and staying—in this work. This presentation will discuss strategies to integrate into practice to promote resilience and sustain as a helping professional. The goal is for participants to leave this presentation feeling more knowledgeable, empowered, and inspired in their role supporting child and family wellbeing.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

JOURNEY MAPPING THE WIC PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

STACY DAVIS, IBCLC

Grand Ballroom
Wednesday, August 26, 2026
4:15pm-5:15pm



[Journey Mapping the WIC Participant Experience Evaluation](#)

The Advancing Health Equity to Achieve Diversity and Inclusion in WIC (AHEAD) 3.0 initiative aims to deepen understanding of, and address barriers to, WIC participation, particularly for Black, Brown, and Indigenous families. Through a combination of a literature review and WIC participant focus groups, the project identifies key experiences across the WIC participant journey, including awareness, application and enrollment, nutrition education and appointments, participation and critical communication, benefit usage, and program retention and recertification. This session will highlight how participant experiences differ by racial and ethnic identity within these phases and provide actionable recommendations to better meet the needs of diverse WIC participants.

BUILDING EMPATHY ACROSS CULTURES

CAROLINE NGUYEN TICARRO

Salon 3
Thursday, August 27, 2026
8:30am-10:00am
10:15am-11:45am



[Building Empathy Across Cultures Evaluation](#)

Cultural identity shapes how clients communicate, make decisions, and engage with health information. For WIC staff serving Oregon's diverse communities — including Latino/Latinx, Indigenous, immigrant, and refugee populations — the ability to adapt MI skills across cultural contexts is essential to building genuine rapport and supporting participant-led goals.

This session helps WIC staff deepen their cultural empathy and flex their MI approach to meet clients where they are. Participants will explore how cultural identity, lived experience, and community context influence communication, practice using reflective listening and affirmations in culturally responsive ways, and build confidence in navigating sensitive or emotionally complex conversations with curiosity rather than judgment. The session emphasizes practical skill-building over theory, with examples and scenarios drawn from WIC's real-world context.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

SUBSTANCE USE: PROTECTING CHILDREN, SUPPORTING FAMILIES

JENNY MOORE

Salon 2

Thursday, August 27, 2026

8:30am-10:00am

10:15am-11:45am



This presentation helps prepare WIC staff to respond confidently and compassionately when families disclose substance use and supports staff in providing the required verbal education to parents and caregivers. Participants will learn about the impact of stigma, understand potential risks to children, learn safe storage and disposal practices, recognize how caregiver education supports child safety, and become familiar with resources available to families affected by substance use.

[Substance Use: Protecting
Children, Supporting
Families Evaluation](#)

EVOLVING BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT: INSIGHTS FROM PEER COUNSELING

PANEL DISCUSSION

East Salon

Thursday, August 27, 2026

8:30am-10:00am



This workshop will explore the evolution, modernization, and future vision of the Oregon WIC Peer Counseling Program, as an adjunct service. Presenters will discuss the history and foundational purpose of peer counseling, the changing needs of WIC participants through virtual communication and remote services, and innovative approaches being used to strengthen participant engagement during the perinatal period.

On the panel: Art Izrry-Turner, Barbara Esparza, Gabriela Garcia, Jeanette Corthell, Julie Reeder, Korina Skaff, Shelby Sayer-Cameron, Shelley Glaze

[Evolving Breastfeeding
Support: Insights From Peer
Counseling Evaluation](#)

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

PLAIN LANGUAGE: SKILLS AND PRACTICE

Weyerhaeuser
Thursday, August 27, 2026
8:30am-10:00am



[Plain Language: Skills and Practice Evaluation](#)

FEEDING YOUR GUT GARDEN: ULTRA PROCESSED FOODS AND THE GUT MICROBIOME

East Salon
Thursday, August 27, 2026
10:15am-11:45am



[Feeding Your Gut Garden: Ultra Processed Foods and the Gut Microbiome Evaluation](#)

COLLETTE KOKESH, MPH, CHES
JOAN MEDLEN, MED, RDN

This 90-minute session introduces the essentials of plain language—how to write clear, simple messages that people can understand and act on the first time they read them. We'll explore what plain language is, why it matters in WIC, and the common barriers that make written messages harder for families to follow. Through practical examples and quick exercises, participants will practice at least one core plain language technique they can start using right away to strengthen their everyday communication. This workshop is designed for any WIC staff member who writes or edits participant facing or internal materials.

BRIZA YORK,
RD, CSP, CSDH, LD, CD

Ultra processed foods are getting a lot of attention in the media so let's take a deep dive into their effects on health. Understanding what ultra processed foods are is the first step since there is no universal and agreed upon definition. We review what foods are better choices than their ultra processed counterparts, highlighting simple swaps in the diet. We take a brief look at the literature on food additives and their effect on the gut microbiome. Touring the gut microbiome, we learn about the di-verse life that exists in our gut and how to best support a healthy gut microbiome. Lastly, we summarize small steps to eat a healthier diet to support our gut microbiome and overall health.

CRAFTING YOUR CALM

MONICA SMITH

Crown Zellerbach
Thursday, August 27, 2026
10:15am-11:45am



[Crafting Your Calm
Evaluation](#)

Sometimes we feel like life is living us instead of feeling like we are living life. Sometimes we can't see our choices. Sometimes we think that calm is something that happens when the conditions are just right and no one gets in our way. Sometimes calm might even feel impossible. What if all of that isn't true? Alice Walker said that the way most people give up their power is by believing that they don't have any. In this workshop we will explore some possible strategies that can help you reclaim your power to step out of the chaos and craft a sense of calm, even when conditions aren't ideal.

This workshop is highly encouraged for staff who meet people at the front desk or answer phones.

Limited to 30 people.

THE POWER OF OUR WORDS

ERICA JOHNSON, MPH, RDN
LAUREN SIMMONS, RDN

Weyerhaeuser
Thursday, August 27, 2026
10:15am-11:45am



[The Power of our Words
Evaluation](#)

Learn how powerful your words can be! Our words can impact our relationships to food and our own body as well as impact young children as they learn and grow. Join us as we share ideas and inspiration for creating positive impacts with the words that we choose in conversations with WIC participants and beyond.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

LOCAL AGENCY NETWORKING

Thursday, August 27, 2026
10:15am-11:45am



[Local Agency Networking
Evaluation](#)

The Local Agency Sharing session provides a dedicated space for similarly sized agencies to connect, deepen their understanding of one another, exchange learning, and strengthen community relationships. Join the conversation, share your insights, and help shape a stronger network of local agency partners.

East Salon: Multnomah, Washington, Salud, Lane, Jackson, Marion

Salon 2: Malheur, Coos, Columbia, Benton, Lincoln, Polk, Crook, North Central, Clatsop, Union, Hood River, Tillamook, Baker, CT Warm Springs, Harney, Lake, Grant, Winding Waters, Yellowhawk, Gilliam

Salon 3: Clackamas, Deschutes, Linn, Douglas/UCAN, Umatilla-Morrow Head Start, Klamath, Josephine

BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELOR NETWORKING

Crown Zellerback
Thursday, August 27, 2026
1:15pm-12:15pm



[Breastfeeding Peer
Counselor Networking
Evaluation](#)

Breastfeeding Peer Counselors

CLOSING SESSION

Grand Ballroom
Thursday, August 27, 2026
2:30pm-3:30pm

STACY DAVIS, NATIONAL WIC ASSOCIATION



JAKE BRUSH

BrushArt

Jake Brush is an Account Director at Brush Art Corporation, where he partners with WIC agencies across the country to develop innovative print, digital, and multimedia education solutions. He specializes in strategic project management, client collaboration, and implementing creative approaches that help WIC programs better engage and support participants.



MICHAELA COGLIANESE, MA

Children's Center

Michaela Coglianese, MA, has been a child forensic interviewer since February 2016, and she became the child forensic interviewer supervisor in 2021. She has a Master's Degree in Psychology from University of Presov in Slovak Republic and a Master's Degree in Forensic Psychology from Argosy University. She is a member of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. Prior to working at the Children's Center, she worked at the St. Mary's Home for Boys for four years, first as a Residential Counselor then as the Admissions Coordinator. She has a particular interest in interviewing adolescents and transgender youth. She has lectured at local and national conferences regarding children with problematic sexualized behavior, complex sexual abuse concerns, and forensic interviewing.



JEANETTE CORTHELL

Washington County WIC

Jeanette is a public health lactation professional with more than 15 years of experience advancing community health outcomes across the tri-county region and beyond. With expertise in quality improvement, technical writing, and public health program supervision, she offers a distinctive combination of strategic leadership, operational excellence, and communication skills.

SPEAKER BIOS



STACY DAVIS, MPH, IBCLC

Center for Innovative Practices in WIC

Stacy Davis, MPH, IBCLC, is the Director of the Center for Innovative Practices in WIC (CIP-WIC) at the National WIC Association, where she leads national initiatives to strengthen and modernize WIC. With more than a decade of experience in maternal and child health, public health, and lactation, Stacy is passionate about advancing equitable access to nutrition and breastfeeding support. She also serves as President of the United States Lactation Consultant Association (USLCA), where she works to strengthen the lactation profession and improve breastfeeding outcomes nationwide. Stacy is a collaborative leader dedicated to developing innovative, evidence-based solutions that improve the health and well-being of families.



KELLY DURBIN, IBCLC

Kelly Durbin is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), childbirth educator, author, and volunteer breastfeeding counselor. She has co-authored original research on breastfeeding topics and is the sole author of *Protecting Your Potential for Breastfeeding*. As a lactation consultant, Kelly has provided one-on-one consultations, taught prenatal breastfeeding education, and led ten lactation support groups in five US states, offering evidence-based information, practical support, and compassionate care to hundreds of families since 2008. Kelly is the Curriculum Development Coordinator for Childbirth International and a La Leche League leader. She lives in Portland, Oregon, USA, with her husband and two daughters.



BARBARA ESPARZA, BS, IBCLC

Washington County WIC

Barbara Esparza, BS, IBCLC, has dedicated 19 years to serving families through the WIC Program. Her experience includes two years as a WIC Certifier, fourteen years as a WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, and three years as a Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator. Bilingual in English and Spanish, Barbara is committed to providing culturally responsive and accessible lactation support. She also mentors local doulas seeking to expand their lactation knowledge and precepts students from the PSU/OHSU Lactation Program.

Barbara has played a key role in supporting Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Expansion services. She is also involved in transitioning the peer counseling program to using Teletask for communication.



GABBY GARCIA

Washington County WIC

Before becoming a peer counselor, I was described as nurturing, courageous, and fierce. With holding the role of the eldest daughter and then motherhood, these traits came with so much more in between, I knew there was a place where I was able to flourish and thrive with all that I am. Becoming a peer counselor meant that I uniquely defined that role and have been able to sprinkle bits and pieces of me that have supported so many people in this journey. Thanks to my amazing team, they have uplifted and embraced all my traits to be the peer counselor I am today.



SHELLEY GLAZE, RDN

Clackamas County WIC

Shelley Glaze is the Clackamas County WIC Coordinator, Supervisor and a Registered Dietitian. She is passionate about all things WIC, but especially loves quality improvement and systems work. In her free time, Shelley loves to cook/bake, garden and watch her 2 boys play baseball – go Wolves!

SPEAKER BIOS



AMANDA HOJNACKI

BrushArt

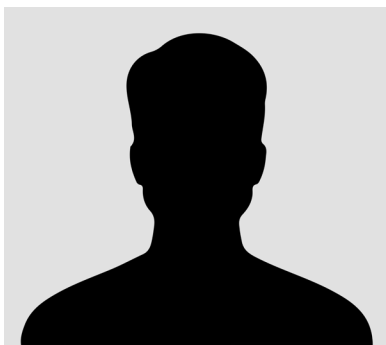
Amanda Hojnacki is a Content Strategist and Copywriter/Editor at Brush Art Corporation with a background in health education, behavior change theories, motivational interviewing, and experiential learning. She develops evidence-based nutrition education materials and digital resources for WIC programs nationwide and has extensive experience creating participant-centered content that supports learning beyond the clinic.



ARACELIS (ARY) IRIZARRY-TURNER

Lincoln County WIC

I was born and raised in the beautiful island of Puerto Rico, a USA territory in the Caribbean. My academic background is in biology from the University of Puerto Rico. I joined the Lincoln County WIC program in 2011 as a certifier and became the WIC Program & Breastfeeding Coordinator in 2016 and earned my Certified Breastfeeding Specialist (CBS) certification in 2020. I'm passionate about breastfeeding and helping parents achieve their breastfeeding goals. My husband, Colby, and I live in the beautiful coastal town of Waldport, with our puppy Jasper. Our son, Bryan, lives in southern Oregon. My hobbies and interests include cooking, enjoying yoga, going for walks and hikes with Colby and Jasper, and exploring the cultural and natural beauty of Oregon.



IAN JAQUISS, JD

Oregon Health Authority

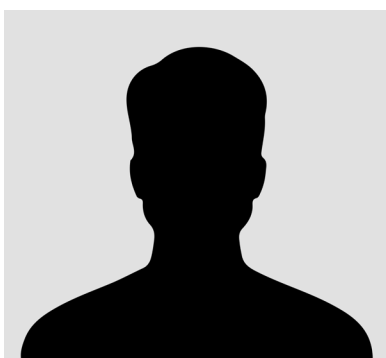
Ian Jaquiss, JD, is the Disability, Inclusion, & Accessibility Strategist in the Equity & Inclusion Division at the Oregon Health Authority. He has been at OHA since 2024. Ian earned his JD at the Cumberland School of Law in Birmingham, Alabama. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Southern California where he became the first person with a traumatic spinal cord injury to swim for at NCAA Division 1 program. Ian represented the United States at the 1984 and 1988 Paralympics where we won two gold medals and two bronze medals. Ian has worked in a variety of fields from journalism to sports, both amateur and professional, to disability inclusion and awareness. Ian and his family live in southeast Portland.



ERICA JOHNSON, MPH, RDN

Oregon WIC

Erica Johnson lives on the north Oregon coast and is a Nutrition Consultant with the Oregon WIC Program. She's excited to share the Power of Words with the statewide WIC audience.



DAVID KENNEDY-WONG

Oregon Health Authority

David Kennedy-Wong facilitates equity and anti-oppression learning experiences at the Oregon Health Authority. He has past experience at the Fair Housing Council of Oregon, as an equity specialist for a social services nonprofit, as a high school math and science teacher, as well as doing contract-based equity work. He has volunteered with various community organizations in Portland - serving on nonprofit boards, teaching bike mechanics, and organizing a divestment campaign - agitating for racial and social justice every step of the way. In his free time, David enjoys riding his bike out of the city and into the hills, building things, and hammocking under trees.

SPEAKER BIOS



JUSTINE KOVAK

Children's Center

Justine Kovak (she/her) is the Healthy Boundaries and Prevention Manager at Children's Center, the Child Advocacy Center serving Clackamas County, where she has worked since 2021. She provides support, consultation, and training to caregivers and professionals on a variety of topics related to preventing abuse, responding to concerns and children's sexual behavior. She has presented at state and local conferences on related topics and in 2025, received the North Star Leadership Award from the Oregon Child Abuse and Human Trafficking Summit. Previously, Justine worked as a case manager and advocate supporting youth and families who had experienced trauma in domestic violence, therapeutic foster care and residential programs. She has significant experience in trauma-informed responses including Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and Collaborative Problem Solving. She has a BA in Sociology from Whitman College. She is passionate about helping adults understand and support young people.



COLLETTE KOKESH, MPH, CHES

Oregon WIC

Collette Kokesh is a Public Health Educator with the Oregon WIC Program, where she develops staff trainings and learning tools that strengthen local agency practice. She holds an MPH in Health Behavior and Community Health, a BS in Nutrition, and is a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES). She is passionate about the role plain language plays in helping everyone access information they can understand and act on.



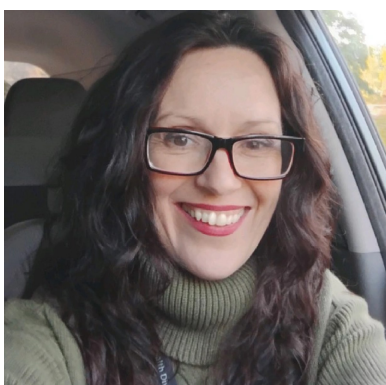
JOAN MEDLEN, MED, RDN Oregon WIC

Joan Medlen is the Training Coordinator for the Oregon WIC Program. She is a registered dietitian, holds a master's degree in education with a focus on instructional design, and has a certificate in Health Literacy. Throughout her diverse career, Joan has worked in clinical and community settings, supported babies, children, and adults experiencing intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families and supports. Among her many roles, she served as the Global Advisor for Health Literacy for Special Olympics, and now has the privilege of supporting Oregon WIC staff who serve the state's women, infants, and children.



ISABEL (ISA) MESA VASQUEZ Oregon Health Authority

Isabel Mesa Vasquez is an Equity, Education and Development Strategist in the state of Oregon. She identifies as a queer woman, and is from Medellin, Colombia. Her professional background is in public health, specifically racial health equity. Isabel is passionate about equity work in all its complexity and looks forward to contributing to a more equitable society through intersectional analyses of oppression and unjust systems. In her free time Isabel is painter and greatly enjoys spending time artist/creative communities.



JENNY MOORE, MA, CPS Washington County Behavioral Health

Jenny Moore, MA, CPS, is a Senior Communication and Education Specialist with Washington County Behavioral Health. Her background includes community engagement, communications, teaching, advising, and extensive work supporting children and families in education, nonprofit, and public service settings. As a Certified Prevention Specialist (CPS), she delivers substance use disorder and problem gambling education and prevention services and promotes strategies that support health and wellbeing across the lifespan, with a special focus on youth and families.

SPEAKER BIOS



CAROLYN NGUYEN TICARRO

Boost Oregon

Caroline Nguyen Ticarro is the Executive Director of Boost Oregon, a Portland-based nonprofit dedicated to empowering healthcare providers and community health workers with evidence-based communication skills. Under her leadership, Boost Oregon has trained thousands of providers across Oregon and nationally, delivering MINT-certified, CME- and CHES-accredited Motivational Interviewing training in both English and Spanish. Caroline brings a systems-level perspective to building provider capacity for authentic, person-centered conversations — including in the complex, time-pressured environments that define public health practice



JULIE REEDER, PHD, MPH, MS, CHES

Oregon WIC

Julie Reeder, Ph.D., MPH, MS, CHES is the Manager for the WIC Integration Team and has worked with the WIC program for 25 years. In her previous role in WIC she conducted the original research on Oregon's breastfeeding peer counseling program and the initial research project serving as the foundation for the introduction of motivational interviewing (participant centered services) in Oregon WIC. Julie is also Associate Editor for the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, Policy Chair for the Oregon Public Health Association, served as Chair for the Food and Nutrition Section of the American Public Health Association, wrote the chapter on WIC for the textbook *Public Health Nutrition*, and is a featured researcher in the textbook *Nutrition Research: Concepts and Applications*.



SHELBY SAYER-CAMERON

Linn County WIC

This past year Shelby has enjoyed the start of her career as public health lactation consultant (IBCLC) for WIC. Her experience is rooted at the peer-to-peer level in supporting breastfeeding families. Shelby worked as a peer counselor for Linn County's WIC pilot program starting in 2021 and filled in as breastfeeding peer counselor coordinator position for one year before becoming an IBCLC. Her goal is to help families minimize their ecological footprint and increase their health outcomes by supporting parents in nursing as long as they want.

Starting 2022 Shelby has served on the board for Linn Benton Lincoln's Breastfeeding Coalition as vice chair and she's served as Oregon Washinton Lactation Association's CERPs coordinator since 2024. She loves music and dancing in her spare time as well as connecting with the lactation community to learn from and support one another in finding ways to help the community and give back.



LAUREN SIMMONS, RDN

Oregon WIC

Lauren Simmons lives in Central Oregon and is a Nutrition Consultant with the Oregon WIC program. Lauren loves finding innovative ways to support WIC staff in providing participant centered services.

SPEAKER BIOS



ARIEL SINGER

Boost Oregon

Ariel Singer is a human-centered healthcare educator, change facilitator, and advocate. As a Motivational Interviewing practitioner and system transformation leader, Ariel has partnered with hundreds of individuals and organizations across the country to co-create and implement shared goals and action plans for health improvement. A seasoned capacity builder, Ariel brings many years of experience leading technical assistance and training programs for community health, offering MI training, implementation support, skills coding, and coaching. Her professional training includes a Master of Public Health and certificates in quality improvement methodologies, human-centered design, facilitative leadership, and yoga instruction.



KORINA SKAFF, BA, IBCLC

Oregon WIC

Korina Skaff is a breastfeeding coordinator for the Oregon WIC Program. Korina is passionate about protecting, promoting, and supporting lactation and breastfeeding and works with WIC local agencies to expand sustainable, equitable peer counseling services across Oregon. She provides leadership, technical assistance, and mentorship to WIC local agency Breastfeeding Coordinators and WIC Designated Breastfeeding Experts. Outside of work, Korina enjoys watching hummingbirds visit her garden and spending time outdoors with her husband, adult children, and furry, four-legged family members.



MONICA SMITH, MA, LPC, RD

Monica has worked with WIC for over 15 years. She has been a CPA, Lactation Educator, WIC Program Supervisor, Clinic Supervisor, Research Assistant and Consultant. She holds dual licensure as a Registered Dietitian and Licensed Professional Counselor because she quickly realized when food and feeding go wrong, there is an emotional component that must be addressed before eating dysfunction can be healed. She now provides training to WIC and other nonprofits in the areas of communication, creating safe and sustainable workplaces and the interplay between food, mood, and health. She considers herself to be a staunch fan of all things WIC.



STEPHANI WEIS

BrushArt

Stephani Weis is a Senior Account Executive at Brush Art Corporation who works closely with state WIC agencies to manage print, digital, and multimedia initiatives. She has extensive experience leading complex projects, fostering long-term client partnerships, and helping WIC programs implement effective, participant-focused education resources that improve engagement and accessibility.



BRIZA YORK, RD, CSP, CSDH, LD, CD

Oregon Health Sciences University

Briza York is a clinical dietitian specialist with 14 years of experience in Pediatric Nutrition. She has worked at Doernbecher Children's Hospital at OHSU for 11 of those 14 years working specifically with the Pediatric Gastroenterology and Pediatric Allergy populations. She sees patients with a wide range of GI conditions, including Inflammatory Bowel Disease, Celiac Disease, Eosinophilic Esophagitis, and various food Allergies/intolerances/sensitivities. She participated in the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center Los Angeles IBD diet training program in 2023-2024 and the Food Allergy Research and Education Pediatric Food Allergy training course in 2020-2021. Outside of work, but still in nutrition, she is an exam item writer for both the Certified Specialist in Pediatric Nutrition and Certified Specialist in Digestive Health exams through Commission on Dietetic Registration. Truly outside of work, she enjoys farmers markets, antiques, and traveling.

GROWING TOGETHER



KEEP ACTIVE!

Being active is another way to connect and helps you learn throughout the day. We have two opportunities for you to get outside, move, and take in the beauty of the day.

MORNING STROLL ALONG THE RIVER



Beth Lanham will lead a group on a morning stroll along the Columbia River. The group leaves the lobby at 7:15am both Wednesday and Thursday morning! You'll return by 8:00am to grab a bite and get ready for the day. The morning stroll will follow the blue path.

PICKLEBALL WITH KORINA!

Thursday only. 7:15 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Join me for fun, informal pickleball at the hotel courts!

Stop at the front desk with a photo ID to pick up a paddle and balls. We'll gather for a group photo at 7:45 a.m. to share at the statewide meeting. New to pickleball? [Start here](#) for rules, strategy, equipment, skills, and everything about the sport of pickleball.

NOTES



Lined area for notes, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



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