

Waukesha County Nutrition Coalition Minutes

August 25, 2026

VIRTUAL

Attendance: *Lyndsay Johnson, Michael Egly- Food Pantry of Waukesha County; Rosa Zibell- Waukesha Free Clinic; Celine Kleist- Eras Senior Network; Debi Thiesenhusen- Monroe Group Senior Housing; Jennifer Waltz- Sussex Outreach Services; Olivia Decker- UW-Madison Extension FoodWise (intern); Jill Herz- UW-Madison Extension FoodWise; Carmen Baldwin- Hunger Task Force; Amanda Denning-Hebron Housing Services; Alyssa Pisarski- Waukesha Public Library; Chloe Bingenheimer- Community Smiles Dental.*

Emailed updates: Mary Jo Hamman—Waukesha County WIC; Shanna Krause- La Casa de Esperanza

Waukesha County Nutrition Coalition Updates:

This is our last virtual meeting of the year. Our final meeting of the year will be at Mukwonago Food Pantry in October.

Agency Updates:

Eras Senior Network- Celine Kleist: Helping seniors in Milwaukee and Waukesha County by providing transportation and yard work. Starting with fall cleanups. We are definitely in real need of volunteers. Transportation is the biggest need right now. If anyone knows of Boy Scout/Girl Scout groups, schools, colleges, places of employment that want to do group volunteering, please let us know. To become a volunteer, there is a spot on our website to get more information: <https://eras.org/volunteer/>

Monroe Group- Debi Thiesenhusen: Senior and disabled subsidized housing; in Waukesha, have a 32-unit senior building. Since 2020, trend has been population turnover due to residents' changing health needs and residents passing away. We currently have openings and welcome referrals of individuals who may be seeking senior housing. Location: 825 Pleasant St. Monroe Group also has residences in Milwaukee and Kenosha area. Navigating challenges that they have seen throughout a lot of community programs, where funding for services has decreased. Residents are utilizing food pantry delivery program.

Extension FoodWise Program for Waukesha, Milwaukee, Racine & Kenosha Counties- Olivia Decker (intern) and Jill Herz: **Olivia:** Olivia has been an intern with FoodWise for several weeks and has been helping the team with projects and helping educators by co-teaching and assisting with their lessons. **Jill:** FoodWise receives EFNEP (Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program) federal funds in Waukesha, Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha counties. We have been super appreciative to have Olivia with us to help with our teaching capacity this summer, given the loss of our SNAP-Ed federal funding last year. This summer, we have been busy with lessons for youth, teens, and a few parent series. With EFNEP federal funding, our focus has been parent/caregiver groups and older youth groups (middle and high school) and parents/caregivers. We also teach 5th, 2nd and 1st grade in school, and some afterschool and summer programs. We are wrapping up summer series and planning for fall. We work with groups where the majority are eligible for FoodShare, WIC, Free/Reduced price lunch, and other similar resources. Reach out to Jill for more info on bringing a series to your organization.

Hebron Housing Services- Amanda Denning: Hebron Housing services provides shelter services for Waukesha County. No major updates—encouraging anyone to call 211 for referrals. We will do coordinated entry (referral system) to put them on the list for possible housing options.

Waukesha Public Library- Alyssa Pisarski: We just finished summer reading programs and are gearing up for fall. Had a summer program with chef in residence in the demo kitchen in the library; worked with recent graduate from Mount Mary Dietetics program. She offered three programs, with her last program scheduled this past week. It was great to have that consistent presenter for that program this summer. Topics included fiber, fueling for an active lifestyle, and had a mix of adult and youth focus. Getting ready to start fall programs. Kids in the Kitchen is a monthly program for kids 5-12 involving healthy food activities, a small snack, and education about the food system. Waukesha Reads will be happening in October; the book this year is 33 Place Brugmann by Alice Austen, a historical fiction book taking place in WWII Brussels. Will distribute them after Labor Day. Usually we do at least one food-focused program related to it; a historian and writer will talk about food rationing and preservation.

Community Smiles Dental- Chloe Bingenheimer: Providing dental care for those with state insurance or uninsured. Accepting new patients at both clinics; there is a referral link on our website. There is also an option to request an appointment right on the website. Individuals can also personally reach out, and the team will give them a call. It was a record-breaking year in terms of reach. Primarily serving kids 18 and under, those with special health care needs, and pregnant moms. We have partnerships with all dental schools in the area where they have interns. Clinic remodels: Just had a Litezilla (a giant Lite-Brite) installed in both clinics. The Waukesha Clinic was totally remodeled with new equipment, floors, walls, etc. If you want to stop by and get a quick tour, please reach out.

Waukesha Free Clinic- Rosa Zibell: Piloting new clinics. Trying to provide continuing medical care for 2-3 clinics per week, and specific clinic one time per month (such as pulmonology, cardiology). During the summer, we were piloting community health counseling with Carroll University. Behavioral health students offered counseling in addition to looking for resources for patients with major needs like food, housing, and transportation. This has been working well so far. We are preparing for fall, making sure we are all up to date on trainings: CPR, crisis intervention, Narcan. It is the 50th year of the clinic this year—a big accomplishment. We will be devoting a lot of time to preparing the celebration for the anniversary.

Hunger Task Force- Carmen Baldwin: Garden to Plate curriculum will be beginning in the fall session in mid-September. We hired a new community nutrition educator, who will be working exclusively with the Garden to Plate curriculum. Working on launching a nutrition app, focusing on nutrition education and resources including garden-to-plate videos, recipes, and help locating food. Planning for fall programming for community nutrition classes. Will be working with Life Navigators, and also with Alaafia, a center for refugees from Africa experiencing domestic violence; will be doing an African cooking class with this group.

Food Pantry of Waukesha County- Michael Egly, Lyndsay Johnson: Backpack Coalition distribution was at the beginning of August; gave out 550 backpacks in partnership with United Way. We will be ramping up for holiday distribution in November, the week before Thanksgiving. Accepting direct referrals for food assistance. Our hours are: Monday-Friday 1-3 PM, Monday evening 6-8 PM, Saturday 9:30-11:30 AM. We still have appointment-based pickups from 11:15-12:15 Monday thru Friday. Food insecurity in Waukesha County is a growing problem; seeing a greater need for people to utilize services. Food Pantry of Waukesha County is growing to meet this need. We have identified and purchased a building and started a capital campaign for 8 million (2 million yet needed). This will allow room for expanded parking, operational docks, etc. Currently in the process of doing more community outreach, so you will start to see more info about the campaign.

Sussex Outreach Services- Jennifer Waltz: As we go into fall, we collect items for guests including winter gear, Halloween costumes. Also providing a Thanksgiving meal and Holiday meal. Seeing a trend that lot more working families are utilizing food pantry, and the data supports that as well.

Emailed Updates:

La Casa de Esperanza- Shanna Krause: We had a pretty good turnout at our Community Health Fair on August 8th, 2026. We still have a few spots open for our Early Head Start Program if you know anyone who could use our services. We work with pregnant moms to age 3.

Waukesha County WIC- Mary Jo Hamman: The main update for WIC is that we no longer have any FMNP checks available to distribute. We ran out early and at this time we do not have any available for distribution. We received 1277 booklets for the 2026 and all have been distributed in the first 2 months (June & July) of the FMNP season. WIC is having our Biennial monitoring in the month of September and have been preparing for that.

Next Meeting: October 27, 2026

Location: Mukwonago Food Pantry

Topic: Mukwonago Food Pantry Services + Tour