

Breastfeeding Positive Peer Influence

- I. The Breastfeeding Curriculum was developed via cooperative agreement between FNS and Every Mother, Inc. The Breastfeeding Curriculum resources replaces previous FNS breastfeeding training. It also adds new training curriculum for the designated breastfeeding expert (DBE).

The curriculum is designed to build competencies among all levels of WIC staff in breastfeeding promotion and support strategies in the WIC Program. It relies on recent science, as well as best practices adopted by state and local WIC agencies across the country. The curriculum has four (4) learning tiers. Each level builds on one another to address breastfeeding competencies based on their role and responsibilities. See “Staff Training” P&P for what levels are required based on staff roles.

- II. The state agency provides yearly funding to begin or maintain peer counseling programs. WIC directors must annually submit the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program Evaluation and Budget Expenditure with their NEP.
- III. Nutrition Services Administration (NSA) funds must be used, according to USDA policy, to support the salaries of peer counselors and their supervisors if Peer Counselor Program funding is not available.
- IV. Peer Counselor Program dollars must be used to support the following:
 - a. Training
 - b. Education
 - c. Travel
 - d. Materials
 - e. Networking opportunities
- V. Each local agency will have a breastfeeding coordinator, a peer counselor coordinator, and/or a designated breastfeeding expert to supervise the Peer Counseling Program and follow guidelines provided. Responsibilities of supervising the Peer Counseling Program include:
 - a. Assists in establishing program goals and objectives.

- b. Determines peer counselor staffing needs.
 - c. Recruits and interviews potential peer counselors in alignment with program policies and standards.
 - d. Arranges for training of peer counselors.
 - e. Mentors new peer counselors during the first three months, providing routine follow-up and guidance in the early days of the job.
 - f. Provides ongoing supervision.
 - g. Holds regular meetings with peer counselors (at least quarterly).
 - h. Collects documentation records and data as appropriate.
 - i. Monitors the program, including review of peer counselor documentation.
 - j. Routinely reports on the program to supervisor.
 - k. Works with other peer counselor supervisors (if available) to assess for ongoing improvements to the program that may be needed.
- VI. The peer counselor must always perform within their job description (see “Staffing Requirements” P&P). Peer counselors should refer participants who may benefit from supplies, or may need assistance with using supplies, to appropriate staff.

Senior peer counselors can be designated for those that have demonstrated expertise in breastfeeding counseling and management. See “Staffing Requirements” P&P for qualifications and responsibilities of senior peer counselors.

- a. The Breastfeeding Curriculum definition of a breastfeeding peer counselor is a paraprofessional support person. See “Staffing Requirements” P&P for qualifications and responsibilities of breastfeeding peer counselor. The appropriate peer counselor will be assigned to WIC participants eligible to receive peer counselor

support. Local staff will assign the appropriate peer counselor by using the drop-down list under BF PC in the Family Data section on the Family screen.

- b. Peer counselors must be removed from the participant's record when the participant stops breastfeeding, is terminated or is no longer in need of peer counselor support. "Date Exited BF PC Program" must be completed in these situations in the BF PC Documentation panel in VISION.
- c. Peer counselors who leave the agency must have their caseload reassigned to a new peer counselor.
- d. EBT Ad Hoc Reports can be used to determine peer counselors who are no longer assigned to participants.
- e. VISION screens can be used to monitor peer counselor caseloads.
 - i. BF PC Caseload screen can be used to search a peer counselor's caseload by using any of the display search criteria.
 - ii. BF PC Assignment screen can be used to search for participants that have been assigned/not assigned a peer counselor.

VII. With sufficient funding, the roles of the breastfeeding peer counselor can be expanded using online peer counseling services which local agencies are strongly encouraged to implement. This will be offered as an optional communication method for WIC participants to contact peer counselors. The online peer counseling services will support social networking in an online one-on-one setting and timely responses to breastfeeding questions, as well as facilitating the sharing of ideas and resources. These online peer counseling services can make lactation support broadly available within a permanent infrastructure, especially in rural areas.

- a. Refer WIC participants to appropriate health care professionals and schedule face-to-face meetings with breastfeeding dyad if there are advanced lactation problems.
- b. If participants are unprofessional, negative, and/or use disparaging language when communicating with the peer counselor online, these participants can be dismissed from this online peer counseling program.

VIII. Online peer counseling connections will be secure and confidential.

- a. Confidentiality when using online peer counseling services is critical.
 - iii. Guidelines when using cell phones to discuss any confidential information:
 - 1. Tell the WIC participant when you are using a cell phone.
 - 2. Inform them of the risks and the possibility for interception and that it may not be 100% secure.
 - 3. Provide the participant with an opportunity to consent.
 - 4. Refer to cell phone information in the Breastfeeding Curriculum. This can be adapted by each local WIC agency.
 - iv. Internet communications and participant confidentiality.
 - 1. Email and internet communication may be subject to interception by a third party resulting in a breach of confidentiality.
 - 2. Limit online communications to factual information which is evidence-based rather than advice which may be more related to personal opinion and/or personal experience.
 - 3. Do not communicate a message that could be considered as medical advice.
 - 4. Review all email thoroughly before sending.
 - 5. Maintain competence by successful completion of the Breastfeeding Curriculum.
 - 6. Avoid negligence (failure to work within the USDA peer counselor job description/scope of work, failure to consult or refer according to the USDA Peer Counselor Curriculum guidelines, and failure to provide attention/care within scope of work). Do not answer participant questions until you can provide accurate and correct information. Do more research and/or gather more information before responding if needed.