

FY 2027 Breastfeeding Action Plan

Objective:

By September 30, 2027, improve local agency WIC staff access to enhanced breastfeeding guidance and training. Providing updated, evidence-based resources will help ensure WIC staff feel confident in offering accurate breastfeeding support, ultimately strengthening both staff and participant experiences and helping families achieve their breastfeeding goals.

Purpose Statement:

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2025 breastfeeding data, among children born in 2022, 87.5% of Iowa mothers initiate breastfeeding, 33.3% breastfeed exclusively until the recommended six months of age, and 44.7% continue to breastfeed at one year of age. The Healthy People 2030 goals for breastfeeding include increasing the proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through six months of age to 42.4% and the proportion that are breastfed at one year to 54.1%. While progress has been made towards improving breastfeeding rates for the WIC population, the most recent Iowa WIC Program data through 2025 show that WIC participants continue to fall behind statewide averages, with 73% initiating breastfeeding, 18% exclusively breastfeeding at six months, and 29% breastfeeding at one year.

The project will emphasize training for new and current local agency staff, creating updated resources for breastfeeding families, and ongoing monitoring and reporting of breastfeeding data.

To address the needs of new staff, the WIC Breastfeeding Team will reorganize and update the WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum. This includes updating the curriculum to reflect current guidelines for mastitis spectrum, transitioning printed training handouts into Workday, and adding additional post-test questions.

To meet the needs of both new and existing local agency staff, the WIC Breastfeeding Team will prioritize planning, developing and implementing breastfeeding education through the 2027 Midwest Region (MWR) Operational Adjustment (OA) Grant Breastfeeding Trainings and the 2027 Annual Iowa Breastfeeding Conference. The team will assist in selecting qualified speakers and identifying evidence-based content aligned with WIC training needs and the challenges staff face in supporting breastfeeding families. Involvement in the state breastfeeding conference ensures breastfeeding education provided to WIC staff is consistent with training received by other lactation professionals across the state. All WIC staff will be required to attend at least one breastfeeding training to ensure they receive updated

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information and are well equipped to support participants with breastfeeding. This approach will strengthen the overall quality and relevance of professional development opportunities for all Iowa WIC staff.

Additional activities will include developing an educational pumping resource for WIC families, informed by input from local agency staff and developing and releasing the 2027 Iowa WIC Breastfeeding Report, highlighting program successes and identifying areas for continued improvement.

Action Steps:

- By September 30, 2027, the State WIC Breastfeeding Team will reorganize and update material in the WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum.
- By September 30, 2027, the State WIC Breastfeeding Team will participate in planning and implementing the MWR OA Grant Breastfeeding Trainings.
- By May 31, 2027, the State WIC Breastfeeding Team will collaborate in planning and implementing the 2027 Annual Iowa Breastfeeding Conference.
- By September 30, 2027, local agency WIC staff will be required to attend a minimum of one breastfeeding training offered by the Iowa WIC Program through either the MWR OA Grant Breastfeeding trainings or the Annual Iowa Breastfeeding Conference.
- By September 30, 2027, the State WIC Breastfeeding Team will collaborate with local agency breastfeeding staff to develop an educational pumping resource for WIC families that includes guidance on pumping, what to expect with breastfeeding in the hospital and post discharge, and information about choosing a quality breast pump, etc.
- By September 30, 2027, the 2027 WIC Breastfeeding Report will be developed and distributed to local WIC agencies and other partners, shared on the HHS breastfeeding and Iowa WIC breastfeeding websites and posted on social media.

Evaluation Plan:

- Number of Iowa WIC breastfeeding training resources created or updated.
- Number of MWR OA Grant Breastfeeding Training courses offered to Iowa WIC staff in 2027.
- Number of breastfeeding trainings (MWR OA Grant Breastfeeding Training or Iowa Breastfeeding Conference) attended by Iowa WIC staff.

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- Percent of local agency WIC staff that participated in at least one lactation training through the MWR OA Grant Breastfeeding Training or the Iowa Breastfeeding Conference.
- Percentage of Iowa WIC mothers that initiate breastfeeding, exclusively breastfeed until six months and continue to breastfeed at one year.

Resources Required:

- Staff time for management and organization of projects
- Microsoft platform for meetings and communication
- Evidenced-based breastfeeding resources for content development
- Training attendance reports
- Iowa WIC Program breastfeeding data and national breastfeeding data

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