

## Peer Counselor Training

### Policy

#### **WIC Nutrition Service Standards:**

##### **Standard 3: Staff Qualifications, Roles and Responsibilities**

Q. The local agency ensures that the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor has the following qualifications:

3. training from a standardized curriculum based on the WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum

##### **Standard 9: Breastfeeding Peer Counseling**

A: The State and local agency have task-appropriate orientation and training based on FNS WIC Breastfeeding Support Peer Counseling training and its updates for peer counseling management and clinic staff that includes:

3. training of peer counselors

E. The State and local agency ensures that breastfeeding peer counselors receive adequate program support that includes:

6. Training with a standardized curriculum based on the FNS WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum and its updates.

#### **USDA WIC Breastfeeding Model Components for Peer Counseling:**

Support of Peer Counselors Includes:

- Training and continuing education using FNS developed training curricula.

### Authority

WIC Nutrition and Services Standards: Standard 3: Staff Qualifications, Roles and Responsibilities, *excerpt*

[WIC Nutrition and Services Standards: Standard 9. Breastfeeding Peer Counseling](#), *excerpt*

[WIC Breastfeeding Model Components for Peer Counseling](#), *excerpt*

### Procedures

The state WIC agency's responsibilities in training include:

- Training the local agency Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator using the **Peer Counselor Management training in the WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum**
- Providing the training curriculum
- Providing training props and equipment
- Provide breastfeeding resources (videos, books, brochures)

The local WIC agency's responsibilities include:

- Making local arrangements for all training events (including site logistics, etc.)
- Using the WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum to train Peer Counselors using self-study modules and interactive training with the local agency Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator
- Training on the use of the electronic data system
- Documenting in the electronic data system that the Peer Counselors have completed Levels 1-2 of the WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum and have demonstrated understanding of all curriculum modules. Peer Counselors must complete training before assuming duties and providing support to WIC clients.
- Mentoring the Peer Counselors and providing routine follow-up and guidance for approximately six months following completion of training by the local agency Peer Counseling Coordinator.

The local agency Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator will develop the training schedule and plan for training Peer Counselors in consultation with the state agency Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator.

The local agency is responsible for scheduling and providing periodic continuing education opportunities for Breastfeeding Peer Counselors to update and expand knowledge in the areas of breastfeeding and human lactation and basic breastfeeding skills. Examples of continuing education and training may include:

- Guest speakers at Peer Counseling meetings
- Breastfeeding topics presented at Peer Counseling meetings or regular WIC staff meetings
- Breastfeeding case studies presented at Peer Counseling meetings
- Breastfeeding trainings offered by the State Agency
- Annual Iowa Breastfeeding Conference
- Local and/or state breastfeeding coalition meetings related specifically to Peer Counseling activities
- Approved independent study
- Other breastfeeding programs

## Best Practices

Peer Counselor recognition and a “graduation” ceremony are important parts of the training because it builds pride and offers a chance to interface with WIC staff and referral sources. Suggestions of those to include:

- Family and friends
- Agency staff
- Media
- Community partners

Presentation of graduation certificates is highly recommended.