

Peer Counselor Training

Policy

Breastfeeding peer counselors must receive approved training before assuming duties and providing support to WIC clients.

Authority

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

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

WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum

Procedures

The state WIC agency's responsibilities in training include:

- Training the local agency breastfeeding peer counselor coordinator using the *WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum*,
- Training of other agency staff using the WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum intended for peer counselor coordinators not required, but recommended,
- Providing the training curriculum,
- Providing training props and equipment, and
- Provide breastfeeding resources (videos, DVDs, 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, with training done by staff with extended breastfeeding training (certified or licensed),
- Training on use of the electronic data system,
- Documenting the peer counselors have completed the *WIC Breastfeeding Training* and have demonstrated understanding of all curriculum modules and
- Mentoring the peer counselors by the Peer Counseling Coordinator, or other staff holding a certification or license in lactation, for approximately six months following completion of training.

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 counselor meetings,
- Breastfeeding topics presented at regular WIC staff meetings,
- Breastfeeding coalition meetings related specifically to peer counseling activities,
- Approved independent study, and
- Other breastfeeding programs.

Best Practices

The local agency Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator will develop the training schedule and plan for training peer counselors in consultation with the state agency Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program Manager. The local agency may choose to partner with the state agency to provide training to peer counselors.

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.