

WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs in Iowa

Policy

All WIC breastfeeding peer counseling programs initiated in Iowa will be consistent with the policies and protocols described in the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program and will use the training materials developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This includes programs funded by the local agency WIC administrative grant and programs funded by other sources (e.g., community grants, foundation grants, etc.).

Authority

FNS Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program

Procedures

Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs will follow the FNS Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program.

- Employ designated peer counselors following the FNS Model definition of a peer counselor
 - Paraprofessional*
 - Recruited and hired from WIC's target population, and, to the extent possible, representing the same racial/ethnic background as the mothers they support.
 - Available to WIC clients outside usual clinic hours and outside the WIC clinic environment. Designated days and hours, or any limitations, will be determined by the local WIC agency.
 - Previous experience with breastfeeding, having breastfed at least one baby for a minimum of four months
- Designate breastfeeding peer counseling program coordinators, or other professionals within the local WIC agency or community, with extended education in lactation support, possessing a certification or license
- Defined scope of practice for peer counselors limited to supporting normal breastfeeding
- Designate professionals within the local WIC agency or community, with specialized training in lactation management and care and possessing a certification or license, to be available at all times to the peer counselors for breastfeeding situations beyond their scope of practice
- Provide written job descriptions for peer counselors
- Adequate compensation and reimbursement of peer counselors considering fair market value for comparable positions within the region.
- Training of appropriate WIC State/local peer counseling management, supervisory, and clinic staff using FNS standardized curriculum based on the *WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum* and its updates.

- Peer Counselors must receive approved training before assuming duties and providing support to WIC clients
- Establishment of standardized breastfeeding peer counseling program policies and procedures at the State and local level as part of agency nutrition education plan
- Adequate supervision and monitoring of peer counselors
- Establishment of community partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of a WIC peer counseling program. Community partners may include local breastfeeding coalitions, Maternal Child and Adolescent Health programs, social service agencies, local public health agencies, birthing hospitals, and others in the community that serve the WIC population.

*Those without extended professional training in health, nutrition, or the clinical management of breastfeeding who are selected from the group to be served and are trained and given ongoing supervision to provide a basic service or function. Paraprofessionals provide specific tasks within a defined scope of practice. They assist professionals, but are not licensed or credentialed as healthcare, nutrition, or lactation consultant professionals.