



SECTION: Nutrition Services 716
SUBJECT: **Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) Program Requirements**
DATE: December 1, 2015 (*revised*)

POLICY: Local programs receiving state BFPC program funds will meet all program requirements for administering and implementing evidence-based BFPC services.

PURPOSE: Breastfeeding peer counseling builds upon WIC’s efforts to promote and support breastfeeding. Peer Counselors provide a valuable service by helping mothers build breastfeeding self-efficacy through breastfeeding education, support and role modeling. Local agency staff’s understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and the establishment of policies and procedures consistent with federal and state requirements are vital to implementing a successful program.

RELEVANT REGULATIONS: ASM 04-02—Request for State and Local Agency Contact on Breastfeeding Peer Counseling, October 2003
ASM 04-27—Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Grants/Training, April 8, 2004
ASM 05-10—April 12-13, 2005 Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Training, January 12, 2005
ASM 05-21—FY 2005: Proposed Peer Counseling Funds
USDA FNS WIC Nutrition Services Standards – Standard 9
USDA FNS Frequently Asked Questions, Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Funds, November 27, 2009
USDA FNS Allowable Costs for Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Funds, updated March 16, 2015

OREGON WIC PPM REFERENCES: ♦435—Staffing Requirements
♦440—Staff Training Requirements
♦450—Confidentiality
♦820—Nutrition Education: Participant Contacts

APPENDICES: Appendix A 716.6 Local Agency Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities
Appendix B 716.8 Local Agency Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Roles and Responsibilities
Appendix C 716.10 Oregon WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Confidentiality Statement

DEFINITIONS: *Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) Coordinator* A designated WIC staff person who provides leadership to the local agency peer counseling program, trains and mentors Peer Counselors and other WIC staff, monitors peer counseling services, and assists participants to prevent or overcome breastfeeding challenges. The Coordinator is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELING (BFPC) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, *cont.*

<i>Breastfeeding Peer Counselor</i>	A WIC paraprofessional staff who gives breastfeeding information and encouragement to WIC pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. She is a mother who is breastfeeding or has breastfed, and she reflects the population served in age, ethnicity, education and language.
<i>Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy</i>	A woman's confidence in her ability to effectively breastfeed.
<i>Scope of Practice</i>	Encompasses a staff position's range of unique roles and activities in the provision of information, counseling and support to WIC participants. Each staff position's scope of practice is defined by the required qualifications and job-specific responsibilities for that position.
<i>Yield</i>	To request assistance from the IBCLC or qualified staff person when an issue or concern is outside of the Peer Counselor's scope of practice.

PROCEDURE:

- BFPC services***
- 1.0 WIC participants enrolled in the BFPC Program shall receive the following services:
 - 1.1 The Peer Counselor will schedule a monthly meeting, at a minimum, with assigned prenatal participants and continue to provide services through at least 6 months postpartum unless breastfeeding is discontinued prior to 6 months.
 - 1.1.1 In addition to the minimum monthly contact, the Peer Counselor will provide additional follow-up contacts, as needed.
 - 1.1.2 An attempted contact is required within two weeks of a participant's expected due date or actual delivery date. This is a critical time frame for checking in with new mothers.
 - 1.2 Participants will be scheduled for group BFPC sessions or alternatively for individual peer counseling visits.
 - 1.2.1 Local agencies will use the *Prenatal Session Guide* to develop and lead group sessions. (Link to this on WIC website.)
 - 1.3 Contacts will occur primarily in the WIC office. The Peer Counselor may make home and hospital visits depending on local agency policy.

BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELING (BFPC) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, cont.

- (BFPC services)*
- 1.4 The Peer Counselor will be on-site at the WIC clinic during specific times of operation to recruit participants, introduce herself, and meet with participants.
 - 1.5 Peer counseling services are in addition to the WIC second Nutrition Education contact. See ♦820—Nutrition Education: Participant Contacts for more information.
 - 1.6 The Peer Counselor will be available for participant-initiated calls during and outside of WIC office hours.

**Staffing: BFPC
Coordinator**

- 2.0 Local programs shall designate a BFPC Coordinator.
 - 2.1 The BFPC Coordinator is an IBCLC or is exam ready and takes the exam within one year of hire.
 - 2.2 The BFPC Coordinator works sufficient hours to perform required duties.
 - 2.3 The BFPC Coordinator position may be combined with a CPA position.
 - A daily time sheet is required detailing hours worked in each position if the Coordinator works under more than one program.

**Duties &
responsibilities**

- 2.4 For Local Agency Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) Coordinator duties and responsibilities, see Appendix A.

**Staffing: WIC
Peer Counselors**

- 3.0 Local WIC programs will recruit and hire women who meet the appropriate definition of a WIC Peer Counselor:
 - Recruited and hired from target populations
 - Has fully breastfed at least one baby through the first year of life or longer
 - Passionate about breastfeeding and helping mothers to breastfeed
 - Paraprofessional
- 3.1 The Peer Counselor works sufficient hours to provide services to her assigned caseload.
- 3.2 Combining the Peer Counselor position with other WIC staff positions is not allowed because Peer Counselors are role models and they are less effective if mothers view them as staff rather than as peers.
 - 3.2.1 Requests for other staffing models that do not meet these requirements must be approved by state Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator.

**State assistance
in hiring Peer
Counselors**

- 3.3 To assist in hiring Peer Counselors, the state WIC program shall:
 - 3.3.1 Provide the local program with Peer Counselor recruitment materials in English and Spanish.

BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELING (BFPC) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, *cont.*

<i>(State assistance in hiring Peer Counselors)</i>	3.3.2	Provide guidance on minimum competencies and criteria for application selection.
	3.3.3	Use TWIST data to provide a list of women who meet selected criteria, such as language, breastfeeding experience and WIC clinic participation.
<i>Duties & responsibilities</i>	3.4	For Breastfeeding Peer Counselor duties and responsibilities, see Appendix B.
<i>Scope of practice</i>	3.5	Peer Counselors will work within their scope of practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer breastfeeding encouragement• Provide information on the significance of breastfeeding and the risks of not breastfeeding• Help women identify their concerns and barriers around breastfeeding• Teach mothers basic techniques that help ensure a successful start in breastfeeding• Recognize signs of the normal course of breastfeeding• Provide basic education, problem solving and support• Help mothers advocate and plan for a positive birth/hospital experience• Help mothers plan for a return to work/school that supports the continuation of breastfeeding• Refer families to appropriate resources
<i>Yield</i>	3.6	Peer Counselors will yield mothers to the BFPC Coordinator or other designated staff when situations arise outside of their scope of practice.
<i>Assuring ongoing participant services</i>	3.7	The local program shall have a plan to assure that participant services are not disrupted in the event of peer counseling staff attrition or long-term absence such as maternity leave.
<i>Confidentiality</i>	3.8	Peer Counselors shall follow participant confidentiality regulations. Peer Counselors must read and sign a confidentiality statement. See Appendix C for a sample. See ♦450—Confidentiality for details.
<i>Training</i>	4.0	Peer Counselors will receive all required training.
	4.1	Training prior to providing participant services will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training listed in ♦440—Staff Training Requirements• <i>Providing Participant Centered Groups</i> module• On-site shadowing and observation of BFPC and WIC staff

BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELING (BFPC) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, *cont.*

- (Training)*** 4.2 Ongoing training will include the following:
- Local program staff trainings and in-services, as appropriate
 - Monthly BFPC meetings facilitated by the local Peer Counseling Coordinator. Meetings will include in-service training specific to BFPC program services, and opportunity for Peer Counselors to meet and learn from each other.
- Mentoring*** 5.0 The local BFPC Coordinator will:
- 5.1 Closely monitor counseling services provided by Peer Counselors and provide feedback and coaching.
 - 5.2 Provide opportunities to practice providing care using case studies and role playing, initially and later as needed.
 - 5.3 Be available to provide assistance with problem-solving as needed.
 - 5.4 Observe Peer Counselors during participant contacts and review peer counseling documentation.
- Assigning participants to Peer Counselors*** 6.0 Local programs providing state-funded peer counseling programs shall offer peer counseling to pregnant and breastfeeding women by the following method:
- 6.1 Prenatal women are offered peer counseling services early in pregnancy, usually during the prenatal certification visit.
 - 6.2 A weekly caseload assignment will be given to the Peer Counselor.
- Documentation*** 7.0 All BFPC participant contacts will be documented in TWIST.
- Inactive status*** 7.1 The name and WIC ID number of participants who accept or request peer counseling will be collected and entered into TWIST.
- 7.2 The mother’s status in TWIST will be changed to inactive if she stops breastfeeding, no longer needs or desires contact, or does not attend sessions or visits and there is no communication between the mother and her Peer Counselor for two consecutive months.
- 7.2.1 The participant’s status may be changed back to active at any time if she requests peer counseling services again.
- Funding*** 8.0 To receive state funding and technical support in providing breastfeeding peer counseling, local WIC programs are required to do the following:
- 8.1 Prepare an annual budget and submit to the state for approval.
 - 8.2 Report expenditures on the state revenue expenditure form.
 - 8.2.1 Funding for peer counseling will be provided via grant adjustment.
 - 8.2.2 Expenditures above the rate specified in the annual service contract will not be reimbursed by the state.

BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELING (BFPC) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, *cont.*

(Funding)

- 8.2.3 Special funding requests must be pre-approved.
- 8.2.4 Expenditures must be allowable BFPC expenses.

8.3 Monitor Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program expenditures to assure they are correctly reported in a timely manner.

Required written procedures

- 9.0 Local programs must have written procedures for their BFPC program. The procedures will include the following, at a minimum:
- BFPC services (see ¶1.0)
 - Monitoring of peer counseling contacts (see ¶5.0)
 - Referral protocol for lactation issues outside of Peer Counselor's scope of practice (see ¶3.6)
 - Documenting breastfeeding peer counseling contacts (see ¶7.0)
 - Providing training and support to Peer Counselors (see ¶4.0-5.0)

Other requirements

- 10.0 Local programs shall establish community partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of their peer counseling program. At a minimum this shall include local hospitals, resources within the agency, and community health workers.
- 10.1 Local programs shall also maintain a list of breastfeeding resources and referrals in the community and at large. ★

REFERENCES:

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Loving Support through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together—For WIC Managers.* 2011
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Loving Support through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together—For Peer Counselors.* 2011

**If you need this in large print or an alternate format,
please call 971-673-0040.
WIC is an equal opportunity program and employer.**

**Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BFPC) Coordinator
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

DEFINITION:

A designated WIC staff person who provides leadership to the local agency peer counseling program, trains and mentors Peer Counselors and other WIC staff, monitors peer counseling services, and assists participants to prevent or overcome breastfeeding challenges. The Coordinator is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Is an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) or is exam-eligible and takes the exam within one year of being hired.
- Has demonstrated experience in project management.
- Has a minimum of one year experience counseling breastfeeding women, preferably in a public health setting.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

- Meets the qualifications for a CPA.
- Demonstrated expertise and advanced knowledge of breastfeeding promotion and support strategies.
- Has experience working with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Has leadership experience and success working with groups.
- Possess communication skills that support success with peers, management and participants.
- Spanish speaking ability, if local program employs a Spanish-speaking Peer Counselor

ROLES:

- Contributes to the development of program goals and objectives for the local agency BFPC program.
- Conducts a needs assessment to identify gaps in breastfeeding resources and services within the local agency and community that the WIC BFPC program can address.
- Oversees the training of peer counselors.
- Oversees the planning, management, implementation and evaluation of local agency peer counseling activities.
- Keeps current with up-to-date breastfeeding information and disseminates this as well as FNS-provided information to other local agency staff.
- Mentors peer counselors, providing routine follow-up and guidance.
- Provides ongoing monitoring and feedback for peer counselors
- Reports on peer counseling program activities to supervisor and the State agency.
- Coordinates with local community stakeholders such as hospitals and health care providers to enhance the effectiveness of the peer counseling program.
- Provides basic and advanced breastfeeding support training to WIC program staff.
- Assures that effective, appropriate and accurate breastfeeding information and services are provided to WIC participants.

BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELING (BFPC) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, *cont.*

TYPICAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assists with recruitment and selection of Peer Counselors to staff the program.
- Participates in the statewide peer counseling work group.
- Provides initial and ongoing training and/or arranges training for Peer Counselors.
- Assists in establishing peer counseling program protocols and policies.
- Manages referrals and determines appropriate case loads.
- Evaluates the work of Peer Counselors ongoing to ensure appropriate counseling, documentation and referral. This may include observing individual and group visits, listening in on phone calls, and accompanying peers on home visits.
- Coordinates and conducts individual and group peer counseling visits.
- Provides training to WIC staff to enhance skills in breastfeeding support.
- Completes state and local agency monitoring and reporting requirements.
- Is available at designated times to provide consultation to the peer counselors.
- Participates in local and state breastfeeding coalition meetings.
- Collaborates with community partners to help identify and address breastfeeding support needs. Partners may include hospitals, clinics, La Leche League, Early Head Start, Healthy Start, Nursing Mothers Counsel and others.
- Uses advanced training and certification to assess participant breastfeeding issues, provide counseling, support and education to promote breastfeeding continuation for high risk families and difficult situations.
- Assesses walk in participants and triages to appropriate staff person, self and or resources.
- Submits required reports to state BFPC Coordinator

**Breastfeeding Peer Counselor
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

DEFINITION:

A WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor is a paraprofessional support person who gives breastfeeding information and encouragement to WIC pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. She is a mother who is breastfeeding or has breastfed, and she reflects the population served in age, ethnicity, education and language.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Has fully breastfed at least one baby through the first year of life or longer.
- Is a paraprofessional (as described in the *Loving Support Model*) from the target population.
- Is passionate about breastfeeding and helping mothers to breastfeed
- Has training from a standardized curriculum based on the *Loving Support Through Peer Counseling* curriculum.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

- Has excellent communication and listening skills.
- Organized and has experience with record keeping.
- Possesses basic computer skill.
- Has sufficient literacy and fluency in English to complete breastfeeding training and written reporting requirements including documentation of participant contacts.
- Is professional and personable.
- Has experience working with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Is able to communicate ideas and directions well in situations that may not be face-to-face (i.e. over the phone).

ROLES:

- Provides mother-to-mother support to prenatal and postpartum WIC mothers by providing basic breastfeeding information and encouragement.
- Counsels prenatal and postpartum participants during face-to-face visits in the WIC clinic and during telephone follow-up calls.
- Refers participants to the BFPC Coordinator/IBCLC or other designated staff, or other appropriate health or social service agency, including outside community breastfeeding resources, for situations outside the peer counselor's scope of practice.
- Is available to participants outside of usual clinic hours and the WIC clinic environment.

TYPICAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Attends state Agency breastfeeding training to become a Peer Counselor. Participants in on-going training. Overnight travel may be required to attend trainings.
- Provides breastfeeding counseling for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to help prevent and handle common breastfeeding concerns.

BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELING (BFPC) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, *cont.*

APPENDIX B, *continued*

- Provides counseling during WIC office visits and during telephone follow-up. May provide breastfeeding help during home visits or hospital visits, if this is a service provided by the WIC agency.
- Is available by telephone during evenings and weekends to new mothers who are having breastfeeding problems.
- Receives a specified caseload of WIC participants and makes routine periodic contacts with all participants assigned.
- Respects each participant by keeping her information strictly confidential.
- Keeps accurate paper and TWIST records of all contacts made with WIC participants.
- Refers mothers according to clinic-established protocols to:
 - Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator, WIC Nutritionist or Breastfeeding Coordinator;
 - lactation consultant;
 - the mother's physician or nurse;
 - public health programs in the community; and
 - social service agencies.
- Leads or assists with prenatal education sessions and breastfeeding support groups.
- Attends staff meetings and breastfeeding conferences/workshops as appropriate.
- Reads assigned books and materials on breastfeeding that are provided by the BFPC Coordinator.
- May assist WIC staff in promoting breastfeeding peer counseling through special projects and duties as assigned.
- May assist the BFPC Coordinator in various breastfeeding promotion and support activities within the community including outreach with mother infant programs, physician offices, hospitals, and local coalitions.
- Completes required quarterly activity logs.

**Oregon WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor
CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

Handling of WIC Participant Information

Trust and confidence are needed for a successful program. This trust must be on all levels...between supervisors and peer counselors, between peer counselors and colleagues, and between peer counselors and participants.

Participants share personal information in order to receive WIC benefits and participate in the program. This includes medical, financial, and personal information. At the same time, participants have the right to know that the information they give will be kept confidential and used only as needed by clinic staff. It is our responsibility to respect their privacy and not discuss participant information.

Discussing confidential information to anyone outside the WIC clinic is prohibited except when it may be needed to provide services to a participant. This includes ensuring that participant records and materials in your possession are not able to be viewed by anyone other than authorized WIC program employees either by access to files, or by observation due to careless record management.

AGREEMENT

I have carefully read the above Confidentiality Agreement and understand the confidential nature of all participant information and records. I understand that it is my job to share participant information *only* with staff involved in the case, and I understand that I am prohibited by law from disclosing any such confidential information to any individuals other than authorized WIC Program employees and agencies with which the participant has given written permission to share information. I understand that any willful and knowing disclosure of confidential information to unauthorized persons is in violation of the law and subject to possible dismissal and legal penalty. I understand that I may need to agree to and sign an agency confidentiality statement, as well.

Name (*please print*)

Signature

Date

Agency Witness

Date