
Subject: Tennessee Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program

Effective Date: October 1, 2019**Revised Date:** August 1, 2021

Policy: The WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program has been funded through USDA since 2004 and is based on research showing that the unique mother-to-mother support component helps improve breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among low-income women. This funding is available to implement and sustain peer counseling programs that operate under research-based practices as outlined in the *WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum*.

The Tennessee WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program is funded through this grant to provide breastfeeding support through peer counseling within WIC in Regional/Metro clinics.

Tennessee WIC provides support to clinics with Breastfeeding Peer Counselor grant programs through Regional Breastfeeding Coordinators and the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program Manager in Central Office.

Peers in the Peer Counselor Program provide breastfeeding education as families make feeding decisions for their infants and toddlers; provide breastfeeding support beginning in pregnancy and through the first year postpartum; and with an understanding of their community provide referrals to support any family needs.

The Tennessee WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program structure and policies are reviewed by WIC Central Office to ensure adherence to USDA guidance and grant requirements. Local Agency policies which differ from State established policies require approval from WIC Central Office.

Reference: USDA Food and Nutrition Service, *WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum, 2020*; USDA/FNS Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance; USDA/FNS WIC Nutrition Service Standards

Procedure:**1. Components of a Successful BFPC Program**

- a. Program leadership and support from management and local WIC staff
 - i. Roles and Responsibilities within WIC
 - a) State Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program Manager
 - b) State Breastfeeding Coordinator
 - c) Regional/Metro Breastfeeding Coordinator
 - d) Designated Breastfeeding Expert
 - e) BFPC Mentor
 - f) Certifying Professional Authority (CPA)
 - g) Clerical Staff and Supervisors (PHOA/PHOS)
 - h) Breastfeeding Peer Counselor
 - ii. Other Leadership's Roles and Responsibilities in Regional and County agencies

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- a) Initiate local level policies that support best practices for the grant requirements
 - b) Support breastfeeding training and education initiatives to develop Peer Counselors, BFPC Mentors, and others
 - c) Develop community networks to utilize Peer Counselors beyond the clinic setting to reach and support underserved participants about breastfeeding and WIC services
 - d) Ensure appropriate use of Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Grant Funding
- b. Peer Counselor access to designated breastfeeding experts (DBE), dedicated supervisors, and program managers for continuous mentoring
- i. Daily ongoing face-to-face support must be provided from clinic or other worksite based BFPC Mentor, DBE, and local clinic supervisors
 - ii. Regional/Metro Breastfeeding Coordinator must be available by email, text and telephone for training, questions, and consults, and provide regular training sessions
 - iii. State Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program Manager must be available by email, text and telephone and provide regular conferencing across the state
 - iv. Other clinic supervisors provide mentoring and support outside of lactation support guidance
- c. Standardized training programs that include the local WIC staff and educate WIC staff on breastfeeding support
- i. Level 1 *WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum* – all WIC staff
 - ii. Level 2 *WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum* – peer counselors, peer counselor supervisors, CPAs, DBEs, and Regional/Metro WIC leadership
 - iii. Level 3 *WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum* – peer counselor lactation support supervisors; CPAs; DBEs; Regional/Metro Nutrition Directors and Breastfeeding Coordinators
 - iv. Level 4 *WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum* – DBEs; Regional/Metro Nutrition Directors and Breastfeeding Coordinators
 - v. Periodic reviews and presentations by Regional/Metro Breastfeeding Coordinators
- d. Familiarizing peer counselors with WIC issues and policies
- i. Regional/Metro Breastfeeding Coordinators provide on-boarding topics that include WIC policies
 - ii. Central Office regular conference calls provide ongoing training and program guidance
- e. Clear guidance on scope of practice and referral networks
- i. ***BPC 03.00.00 Peer Counselor Scope of Practice Topics***
 - ii. ***BPC 03.01.00 Yielding Lactation Support***

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- f. Adequate funding to maintain the program
 - i. Central Office maintains budget and grant oversight

- g. Methods to retain peer counselors for program stability
 - i. BFPC Exit Interview
 - ii. Program Assessment and Monitoring