

## Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program Training Resource

Purpose: This guide to be used by the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BFPC) Supervisor at the local agency when starting a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program or training a newly employed Peer Counselor.

### Policies/Tools to Reference:

- [WIC Policy Manual: Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program \(BFPC\)](#)
- [Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Orientation Checklist](#)
- [Peer Counselor Observation/Evaluation Tool](#)
- [Stay in Your Lane](#)
- [Peer Counselor USDA Training Materials](#)

### Resources for Peer Counselor Program Supervisors:

- [Managing Your Peer Counseling Team](#), presented by Cathy Carothers. This is an excellent resource for Peer Supervisors, addressing options for mentoring Peer Counselors and key issues to consider when supervising Peer Counselors.
- [Peer Up Illinois: A Snapshot of Effective Peer Counseling Programs](#), a panel discussion moderated by Cathy Carothers. IL Peer Counselor Supervisors and Peer Counselors discuss what makes a successful program.

### Other Available Resources:

- [USDA WIC Breastfeeding Support](#)
- [Business Case for Breastfeeding](#)

### Instructions:

- Hire a Peer Counselor who meets the specific qualifications: must have breastfed within the past 5 years, is a paraprofessional with similar characteristics to the WIC population and is able to work in the WIC clinic and outside usual business hours. (BFPC 2.1)
- Peer Counselor is compensated fairly for all jobs including contacts outside of usual business hours and for personal phone use, mileage for travel for home or hospital visits as well as training or meetings. (BFPC 3.3)
- Upon hiring a new Peer Counselor, contact State Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program Coordinator [Audrie.Mumphery@illinois.gov](mailto:Audrie.Mumphery@illinois.gov) to add Peer Counselor's name/email to the contact list. This will assure Peer Counselor receives email communications.

Local Agency provides BFPC Program training to ensure compliance with state policies. Documentation must be kept on file for review at MEQA. All WIC staff must receive training in the purpose, function, and integration of BFPC at orientation and as needed (BFPC 3.1)

**Peer Counselor completes:**

WIC job-specific training at orientation and annually (PPM AD 11) as appropriate to job duties. BFPC should be oriented to the WIC program and trained on WIC policy specifically for each task they are responsible. (BFPC 4.1)

**Sample Training Schedule:**

- Allow time in your schedule to meet with the new Peer Counselor each day of training, in person or via phone, to discuss progress and answer questions.
- The following is only a guide to assist Peer Counselor Supervisors in training Peer Counselors. You may choose to plan the training in a way that best suits the Peer Counselors' schedule.
- Refer to [Peer Counselor USDA Training Materials](#) unless otherwise indicated:

STEP 1: Initial Orientation		
Topic	Resources	Instructions
Job Orientation	Job Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors</li> </ul> Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts: <i>Handout-JobDescription3-PeerCounselor...pg. 6</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide orientation to clinic and staff introductions.</li> <li>Provide overview of Peer program and review the Peer Counselor's duties and job description.</li> </ul>
WIC Orientation	<a href="#"><u>Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Orientation Checklist</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer Counselor must complete Civil rights, Security, and Confidentiality training, and read and sign the confidentiality agreement prior to contact with WIC participants and their information.</li> <li>Meet with the peer counselor to complete clinic observation if applicable, and to discuss how the peer role relates to the required training.</li> </ul>
Equipment	Cell phone, Computer, locked file box, etc.  Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts: <i>Staff Roles: PC Management Level 3 Staffing/Supervision 3 PC Equipment and Materials Issued... pg.125</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with the Peer Counselor to issue equipment necessary for job duties, and to discuss the importance of confidentiality, expectations for equipment use, and secure storage of equipment and paper documents.</li> </ul>

<b>STEP 2: Before Supervised Contacts</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Instructions</b>
Training	Podcasts (links on last page of this guide)  <a href="#"><u>Illinois Breastfeeding Events &amp; Activities</u></a>	<b>USDA's Breastfeeding Curriculum training</b> is a State provided in-person training and is a requirement for all new Peer Counselors. It is typically offered twice a year. If a new Peer Counselor will be making unsupervised independent contacts prior to attending the face-to-face training, it is recommended they complete the series of podcasts.  Have Peer watch 1-2 modules at a time, and then discuss questions. If the Peer does not have questions, pose the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What new thing did you learn?</li> <li>• What was the best part?</li> <li>• What seems hard to do in practice?</li> </ul>
Scope of practice	Scope of Practice for the WIC Peer Counselor  Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts: <i>Staff Roles - Peer Counselors: Roles and Responsibilities</i> <b>Level 2</b> <b>2</b> Handout: <i>Scope of Practice</i> ...pg.10	Review and discuss the Peer Counselor's scope of practice.
	BFPC Addendum  Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts: <i>Staff Roles - Peer Counselors: Roles and Responsibilities</i> <b>Level 2</b> <b>2</b> Handout: <i>When to Yield...</i> pg. 130	Discuss guidelines and procedures for yielding and referring.  Discuss local agency referral procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who does the Peer Counselor contact when she has questions or encounters situations outside of the scope of practice, during clinic hours, and outside of clinic hours?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2 cont. below</b>		

<p>Observation</p>	<p>Shadowing Breastfeeding Experts -Peer Counselor Log</p> <p>Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts:  <i>Staff Roles: PC Management Staffing/Supervision 8 Shadowing Breastfeeding Experts – PC Log... pg.133</i></p> <p><a href="#">Stay in Your Lane</a></p> <p>Shadowing breastfeeding Experts – Debriefing.</p> <p>Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts:  <i>Staff Roles: PC Management Staffing/Supervision 9 Shadowing Breastfeeding Experts – Debriefing... pg. 136</i></p>	<p>The Peer Counselor Supervisor coordinates shadowing opportunities for the Peer Counselor based on the needs of the Peer and the availability of trained staff to observe.</p> <p>This may include observation of the WIC CPA counseling a pregnant or breastfeeding participant, observation of the WIC clinic, a breastfeeding class, and direct conversation with an experienced Peer.</p> <p>Be sure to the discuss scope of practice (Peer, CPA, CLC/CLS, IBCLC), as the CPA and the Designated Breastfeeding Expert (DBE) will have a different scope than the Peer Counselor.</p> <p>The Shadow log may be used to track observations, and as a tool for the Peer Counselor Supervisor to use with the Peer to discuss the shadowing experiences.</p>
<p>Navigation and Documentation</p>	<p>Documentation in I-WIC  <a href="#">NPS Documenting in IWIC</a></p> <p>Policy - BFPC 2.4</p>	<p>Provide an overview of role-specific permissions and discuss areas of the system that Peer will be using.</p> <p>Discuss and practice documentation.</p>
<p>Breastfeeding Basics</p>	<p><a href="#">IDHS WIC Breastfeeding Handouts</a></p>	<p>Provide the breastfeeding pamphlets available through the State and your local agency for the peer to read and become familiar with. Discuss how these materials are used in your agency.</p>

**STEP 3: Before Independent Contacts**

Topic	Resources	Instructions
Referrals	Local Agency Peer Program Protocol  <a href="#">Guidelines for Referrals for Peer Counselors</a>	Discuss how Peer will receive referrals from CPAs and how/when Peer will make referrals to CPAs/DBE.  Who is/are the Designated Breastfeeding Expert(s) in your clinic that the Peer can refer to? What is the process for making referrals to the DBE or PC Supervisor after WIC clinic hours?
Types of Contacts	Local Agency Peer Program Protocol  Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts: Staff Roles: PC Management <a href="#">Level 3</a> Policies 2 Sample Social Media Policy... pg. 114	Discuss how and where peers will provide services and the protocol for doing so.  Discuss the use of each communication method as applicable per local agency procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-person – i.e., clinic, home* or hospital visits</li> <li>• Technology – i.e., phone calls, text messaging, email, social media</li> <li>• Content – appropriate sharing of videos and websites within the peer scope of practice</li> </ul> Good sites for participant education resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">USDA's WIC Breastfeeding Support</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Breastmilk Every Ounce Counts. (videos)</a> (available in <a href="#">Spanish</a>)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Office of Women's Health.</a> video blogs</li> </ul> <p>*Note: The peer should complete home visitor local agency training prior to doing home visits.</p>

<p>Planning for Follow-up</p>	<p>Local Agency Peer Program Procedure</p> <p>Contact log</p>	<p>Discuss contact frequency expectations and methods for tracking contacts. (BFPC 2.5)</p>
<p>Supervised Contacts</p>	<p>Peer Counselor Observation Tool</p> <p>Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts:  <i>Staff Roles: PC Management Staffing/Supervision 10 Peer Counselor Observation Tool ... pg. 137</i></p>	<p>Routinely observe newly hired Peers during contacts with mothers to provide guidance and affirmation.</p> <p>Observe Peer completing various contacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prenatal breastfeeding education in the clinic</li> <li>• Postpartum breastfeeding support in the clinic</li> <li>• Prenatal call</li> <li>• Postpartum support call</li> </ul> <p>Consider using the Peer Counselor Observation Tool to help guide and provide structured feedback.</p>
<p>Peer Program Outreach</p>		<p>Inform new moms about the Peer Program. Consider personalizing brochures or fliers to include peer counselor contact information. Peer Counselor business cards are allowable costs. Include a non-discrimination statement.</p>

**STEP 4: Ongoing Feedback and Support**

Routinely observe newly trained peer counselors during contact with mothers to provide guidance and affirmation.

Topic	Resources	Instructions
Check-ins	Staffing and Supervision  Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts: <i>Staff Roles: PC Management Staffing/Supervision 11 Questions for Mento... pg.138</i>	Upon completion of the initial training, schedule routine meetings, at least monthly, with the Peer Counselor in-person or by phone to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess the Peer Counselor's progress</li><li>• Review counseling style and skills</li><li>• Address concerns and determine further training needs</li><li>• Review the Peer Counselor's job satisfaction</li><li>• Support and mentor the Peer Counselor's continuing education</li><li>• Review weekly activity logs and discuss contacts</li><li>• Discuss case studies</li></ul> Questions to consider asking/discussing with peers at monthly meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Of the moms you talked with last week, who stands out in your mind?</li><li>• What went well? What are you most proud of?</li><li>• What made you feel uncomfortable?</li><li>• What solutions did you offer for breastfeeding problems?</li></ul> What are you seeing as some of the biggest obstacles for new moms?



<p>Observations</p>	<p>Peer Counselor Observation and Evaluation Tool</p> <p>Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts:  <i>Staff Roles: PC Management Staffing/Supervision 10 Peer Counselor Observation Tool ... pg. 137</i></p>	<p>It is recommended to use this tool to provide structured feedback while observing a peer counselor's early contacts with WIC participants, and at least quarterly during the first year of hire.</p>
<p>Documentation Review</p>	<p><a href="#">NPS Documenting in IWIC</a></p> <p>Policy - BFPC 2.4</p>	<p>For new peer counselors, a more frequent review of at least 3 participants quarterly is recommended for the first year.</p>
<p>Participant Feedback</p>	<p>Staffing and Supervision</p> <p>Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts:  <i>Staff Roles: PC Management Staffing/Supervision 14 PC Phone Feedback Form... pg. 144</i></p>	<p>Conduct a brief survey with participants being followed by the Peer Counselor at least quarterly. This may be done informally during an appointment or follow-up with a participant, in reviewing activity logs, or formally, using a tool such as the Sample Phone Tool.</p>

**STEP 5: Ongoing Skill and Knowledge Development**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Instructions</b>
Community Resources		Discuss the breastfeeding resources available in the community that the peer can share with moms to for an additional layer of breastfeeding support.
Continuing Education	Breastfeeding events and activities:  <a href="#">Illinois Breastfeeding Events &amp; Activities</a>	Ongoing training opportunities must be made available to the peer counselor.  Ongoing training may include webinars, in-services, staff meetings, State and Local training, and participation in statewide Peer Counselor Networking Conference Calls.
Guidelines for Making Home/Hospital Visits (if allowed by agency)	Local agency protocol: Home Visiting and Safety Guidelines  Breastfeeding curriculum Handouts: <i>Staff Roles: PC Management Policies 3 Sample MOU with Hospitals ... pg. 116</i>	Home/hospital visit training should be provided by the local agency if a peer will be providing it. Note: Peer Counselors should be well-trained in their role prior to making home and/or hospital visits.

## **Podcasts for WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors**

These podcasts, available on YouTube, have been created to supplement the peer counselor training and can be used to reinforce key messages in the curriculum as part of the initial training or ongoing training. It is recommended that the peer counselor discuss with their supervisor after viewing each video. Questions that the supervisor might ask the peer include:

- What in the video seems hard to do in practice?
- What is one new thing that was learned in the video?
- What was the best part of the video?

[2-2-A Three Step Counseling- Open-ended Questions](#)

[2-2-B Three Step Counseling- Affirmations](#)

[2 3 B Level2 Difficult Counseling Situations Counseling In Difficult Situations - YouTube](#)

[3-4-A Pregnancy- Feeding Decisions](#)

[3 5 C Level2 How Milk is Made Parts of the Breast - YouTube](#)

[4 2 A Level2 Early Days First Hour and Skin to Skin Practices - YouTube](#)

[6 2 A Level2 Common Infant Issues Latch Difficulties - YouTube](#)

[4 4 C Level2 Position and Latch Talking With Moms - YouTube](#)

[4 2 C Level2 Early Days Feeding Cues - YouTube](#)

[4 3 A Level2 Baby Behavior Normal Baby Behaviors - YouTube](#)

[3-5-A How Milk is Made- Promoting Exclusive Breastfeeding](#)

[6 1 E Level2 Common Maternal Issues Talking With Moms - YouTube](#)

[4 4 B Level2 Position and Latch Unique Situations - YouTube](#)

[4-5-A Ongoing Breastfeeding- Being a New Mom](#)

[4-7-C-Level 2-Mother Baby Separation-Support Options for Work and School - YouTube](#)