

Subject: Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program**Item: Peer Counselors: Requirements and Responsibilities**

PURPOSE:

Provides information on the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BPC) peer counselors (PC) responsibilities.

POLICY:

- I. All local agencies (LAs) with a BPC Program must hire PCs who meet USDA requirements. PCs must provide BPC Program services in one-on-one and group settings for BPC Program participants, with a goal of increasing breastfeeding initiation, exclusivity and duration rates. PCs must be trained and work under the supervision of the PC Supervisor / International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

PROCEDURE(S):

- I. Qualifications
 - A. PCs:
 1. Are paraprofessionals.
 2. Are enthusiastic about breastfeeding and have a desire to share that enthusiasm.
 3. Are recruited and hired from the target population.
 4. Have excellent communication skills.
 5. Have successfully breastfed at least one baby.
 6. Speak the same language as the target population.
- II. Responsibilities
 - A. PCs must provide the following services with BPC Program participants:
 1. Provide basic breastfeeding information and support to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.
 2. Counsel pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to help avoid common breastfeeding problems.
 3. Maintain regular contact (telephone, in person, in hospital, at home, email, text, etc.) in accordance with the frequency intervals in WPPM 630-13 Contacts.
 4. Provide support and information to breastfeeding mothers who are working or going to school.
 5. Document all counseling encounters in the Peer Counselor Database and develop a procedure for identifying PC participants in WIC management

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- information system (WIC MIS) or another location that allows all non-PC staff to easily identify the participant's PC.
6. Teach use, cleaning, and assembly of breast pumps, in addition to expression and storage of human milk as needed, however PCs do not clean breast pumps.
 7. Facilitate post-partum breastfeeding support groups for BPC Program participants.
 8. Make immediate referrals to the IBCLC, healthcare professionals or other community resources, according to the LA's established referral protocol, when they encounter:
 - a. Breastfeeding problems outside of the normal breastfeeding experience.
 - b. Breastfeeding problems that are not resolved within 24-48 hours of their intervention.
 - c. Problems in an area other than breastfeeding.

AUTHORITY:

All State Memorandum (ASM) 04-27 – Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Grants/Training, April 8, 2004.

Loving Support© Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together – for WIC Managers, USDA, November, 2011.

Loving Support© Frequently Asked Questions 2011.

Loving Support© Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program.

CROSS REFERENCE:

WPPM 630-13 Contacts

WPPM 970-10 Glossary