

## 310.28

# WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Guidelines

## Qualifications and Requirements

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**Required experience**

A breastfeeding peer counselor must currently be a WIC participant or must have been a WIC participant in the past and must have successfully breastfed at least one baby for a minimum of four months. She must have a telephone and be willing to make contacts from home. Breastfeeding peer counselors must also be available outside the usual clinic operating hours to mothers who are breastfeeding.

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**Desirable experience and skills**

The following experiences and skills are desirable:

- Enthusiasm about breastfeeding and desires to help other mothers enjoy a positive breastfeeding experience;
- Good communication skills;
- Basic computer skills;
- Demographic similarities with the WIC participants served by the local agency such as age, ethnicity, and language; and
- Reliable transportation.

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**Physical requirements**

This position may require lifting up to 25 pounds.

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**Travel requirements**

Travel to outlying clinic sites may be required. Travel may be required to participate in continuing education events.

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**Supervision of counselor**

The breastfeeding peer counselor is responsible to the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator of the local employing agency.

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## Responsibilities

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**Introduction** The breastfeeding peer counselor may have all or any combination of the responsibilities in the following areas.

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**Client contacts** A breastfeeding peer counselor's clinic responsibilities may include:

- Counseling pregnant and breastfeeding WIC mothers at scheduled intervals determined by the local WIC agency;
- Counseling pregnant and breastfeeding WIC mothers at the WIC clinic;
- Making established periodic contacts with all assigned clients;
- Providing basic breastfeeding information, support and encouragement to new mothers including the benefits of breastfeeding, overcoming common barriers, and getting a good start with breastfeeding;
- Educating mothers on how to prevent and manage common breastfeeding concerns;
- Referring mothers for information and services according to agency protocols;
- Attending and assisting with prenatal breastfeeding classes and breastfeeding support groups for WIC participants; and
- Assisting WIC staff in promoting the breastfeeding peer counseling program through special projects, outreach activities, and duties as assigned.

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**Training** A breastfeeding peer counselor's training responsibilities include:

- Completing the initial *Loving Support* classes to become a breastfeeding peer counselor,
- Observing other breastfeeding peer counselors, WIC dietitians and nurses, lactation consultants or other breastfeeding experts as they help mothers and babies to breastfeed,
- Attending scheduled breastfeeding peer counselor group meetings and breastfeeding conferences and workshops as appropriate,
- Mentoring newly hired Peer Counselors as assigned,
- Use of the electronic WIC electronic data system,
- Reading assigned books and materials and viewing assigned videos and DVDs provided by the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator, and
- Continuing education as needed.

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**Recordkeeping** A breastfeeding peer counselor's recordkeeping responsibilities include:

- Keeping each client's information strictly confidential,
- Maintaining accurate records of all contacts made with assigned mothers using the WIC electronic data system, and
- Completing and submitting activity reports as required by the local WIC agency.

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