I. **Policy:** All Breastfeeding Peer Counselors shall be qualified to promote breastfeeding within their scope of practice.

II. **Procedure(s):**

   A. Each local agency shall have a minimum of one (1) Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BFPC). Specific qualifications required:

   1) Has successfully breastfed one or more infants for at least 6 months or more.

   2) Can work a minimum of five (5) hours per week, not to exceed the hourly allotment assigned by the local agency.

   3) Can make and receive phone calls from home.

   4) Has reliable transportation.

   5) Has interpersonal skills needed to work with and counsel participants.

   6) Is a paraprofessional (as described in the WIC breastfeeding curriculum) ideally from the target population.

   7) Has basic computer skills and technical proficiency.

B. Breastfeeding Peer Counselors shall:

   1) Have a task appropriate orientation to the Virginia WIC Program, including successful completion of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) competency-based training for WIC breastfeeding curriculum levels 1-2 and associated activities within ninety (90) days of hire.

   2) Create a breastfeeding-friendly environment. Refer to BF 02.0.

   3) Counsel with an understanding of how cultural attitudes and practices of the individual, family and community impact breastfeeding.

   4) Refer participants to the WIC-Designated Breastfeeding Expert, WIC nutritionist or other appropriate health or social service agency, including
outside community breastfeeding resources, for situations outside the BFPC’s scope of practice. (See Standard 11: Participant Referrals)

5) Demonstrate knowledge of basic breastfeeding skills:
   a. Various positioning techniques.
   c. Collection and storage of breast milk.

6) Treat pregnant and breastfeeding participants with respect and keep their personal health information confidential.

7) Offer breastfeeding participants continued education and support on maintaining a positive breastfeeding relationship with their infant until the infant is weaned.

8) Work with WIC-only pregnant and breastfeeding participants individually and in groups or classes. Contacts shall be made at home, hospital, participant’s home, or clinic setting.

9) Teach breastfeeding classes and assist with the breastfeeding segment of prenatal or newborn classes.

10) Facilitate or refer participants to breastfeeding support groups within the local agency or the community.

11) Contact each new pregnant participant before delivery to discuss infant feeding options according to BF 01.4. Utilize Crossroads to assess and document breastfeeding progress.

12) Contact each breastfeeding participant to discuss breastfeeding progress and/or issues according to BF 01.4. Utilize Crossroads to assess and document breastfeeding progress.

13) Make appropriate referrals according to CRT 08.0.

14) Abide by the limitations of the Peer Counselor as follows:

   a. Shall not provide specific medical advice.
   b. Shall not make hospital visits without prior approval by the WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator.
### Subject: Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Qualifications and Responsibilities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Reference: §C.F.R. 246.3</th>
<th>Effective: February 1, 2023</th>
<th>Supersedes: March 14, 2022</th>
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- c. Shall not function in duties outside of the *Breastfeeding Peer Counselor’s Scope of Practice*.
- d. Shall not perform non-BFPC duties without prior written approval from State WIC Office, part time BFPCs may work in other Health Department roles (Dual Role BFPCs).
  - o BFPC performing non-breastfeeding duties must be compensated for that time with NSA or other appropriate program funds.
  - o Dual Role BFPCs may serve as Outreach Workers or other equivalent health district roles.
  - o Dual Role BFPCs *may not* work in any other WIC roles as part of the eligibility determination or certification process. Refer to USDA FNS Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance, p. 23.

15) Screen and assist with electric breast pump loan agreements according to BF 04.2, and BF 04.3. Utilize Crossroads to assess and document breastfeeding progress.

16) Attend local, regional, or state breastfeeding promotion and support training when possible. May participate in local breastfeeding coalitions.

17) Complete all State Wic Office required continuing education.