



United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service
National Agricultural Library

Dear WIC Nutrition Professional,

Greetings from the WIC Works Resource System and welcome to the spring 2005 mailing on **building breastfeeding-friendly communities by creating breastfeeding partnerships**. The USDA/Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the National Agricultural Library (NAL)/Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC) are pleased to feature this important topic and provide you with the enclosed materials.

Research has shown that there is no better food than breast milk for a baby's first year of life. As you know one of WIC's goals is to promote breastfeeding as the optimal choice for the nutritional status of our participants. As a result of WIC's breastfeeding policies and program activities since the 1990's, the breastfeeding rates of WIC participants have increased at a faster rate than those of the non-WIC population. The substantial efforts made by *you*, the WIC staff, directed toward breastfeeding promotion and support are responsible for this encouraging trend.

Using Loving Support to Build a Breastfeeding Friendly Community

FNS recently completed a number of training and technical assistance grants entitled "Using *Loving Support to Build a Breastfeeding Friendly Community*" that builds on the enormous success of the *Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work* national promotion campaign. Nineteen states receiving grant funds developed community-based breastfeeding programs by collaborating with key stakeholders and community partners. These partnerships allow WIC staff and the community to network and develop strategies to address and overcome barriers to breastfeeding by actively engaging in community relationships that support lasting changes. Examples of community collaborative activities include starting a "best practices" survey and award system in your local hospital or sending a gift basket with a breastfeeding poster to a local physician's office. This mailing highlights some creative ideas and activities for building community partnerships that you can incorporate in to your WIC program.

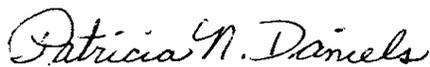
Included in this mailing is a partnership puzzle to assist you in your community outreach efforts. The handout features partnership puzzle pieces on the front and a checklist of ways to initiate these partnerships on the opposite side. You will also find a sample letter to use as you to begin contacting partners in your community. For more information and additional activities on "Using *Loving Support to Build a Breastfeeding Friendly Community*", visit the WIC Works Resource System at http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Learning_Center/support_bf.html.

Using Loving Support to Implement Best Practices in Peer Counseling

FNS also has a vision for peer counseling programs in WIC. FNS' newest breastfeeding project, "Using *Loving Support* to Implement Best Practices in Peer Counseling" builds upon and strengthens the existing *Loving Support* projects and enhances the continuity of WIC's current breastfeeding management and counseling efforts. "Using *Loving Support* to Implement Best Practices in Peer Counseling" is a training and technical assistance project that equips WIC Programs with a model to aid them in designing, building, maintaining and sustaining peer counseling programs. Approximately \$15 million was made available to WIC State agencies in fiscal year (FY) 2004 and in FY 2005 in support of this initiative. In the summer of 2004, State teams of WIC staff received training in managing peer counseling programs; in FY 2005 training will be conducted for State teams of WIC staff who are involved in the training of peer counselors. More information about this project can be found at http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Learning_Center/support_peer.html

Together, We Can Keep the Trend Going

We believe by providing breastfeeding education, awareness and training; working with community partners; and implementing strong peer counseling programs WIC will continue to see increased breastfeeding rates and experience the same significant strides as seen over the past ten years. We hope the enclosed partnership puzzle, invitation letter and window decal will provide you with the tools you need to start breastfeeding partnerships in your community today. Thank you for being such an important part of our success in enhancing our breastfeeding promotion and support efforts.



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