

# Module 5: Peer Program

DECEMBER 2024

## Module 5: Peer Program

### Introduction

In this Module, we will provide information on the Peer Breastfeeding Support Program and an overview of peer funding and reimbursement.

### Peer Breastfeeding Support Program

Peer breastfeeding support programs were initiated to supplement prenatal and postpartum breastfeeding support available to all WIC participants. Peer counselors are recruited from the communities they serve and often speak the same language. Peers connect parent-to-parent with their clients and are a trusted source of information and support. There are currently 16 peer programs in Minnesota, representing 27 counties, 1 city, 1 tribe, and 17 grantees.

### Peer Program Overview

USDA provides dedicated funds for Peer Breastfeeding Support Programs (PBSP), which follow the USDA evidenced-based peer program model. In Minnesota, MDH administers the WIC and PBSP grants. Counties, cities, tribes, and private non-profits apply for WIC and PBSP grants every five years to offer the programs at their local community level. MN Operations Manual [Section 6.12 Peer Breastfeeding Support](#) provides policy and guidance for operating the PBSP.

### Peer Program Funding Basics

Peer grant awards and funding levels are contingent on Minnesota WIC's USDA annual peer funding award. Annual budget requests for the next federal fiscal year are due in July. Award notifications are sent in September for grant funds beginning October 1. The annual funding awards may vary annually based on federal funding awards and balancing the needs of all peer programs across the state.

### WIC Federal Funding Basics

To meet federal WIC program requirements, maintain accurate, current, and adequate records, which summarize and report the agency's financial status. Records that verify all expenses, whether categorized as direct or indirect, and including time reporting, payroll, and purchase records, must be maintained for six years from the end of the grant agreement end date. See MN Operations Manual [Section 1.14: Record Retention](#).

### Peer Program Budgets

## MODULE 5: PEER PROGRAM

Expenses charged to the peer grant cannot exceed the amount of the annual grant award. Modifications to the budget greater than 10 percent of any budget line item requires prior written approval. Peer-related expenses in excess of the peer grant amount, may be claimed on your monthly WIC claim for reimbursement.

### Direct Peer Service Allowable Costs

USDA emphasizes that the priority of PBSP funds be used for direct peer services. These direct peer service expenses include:

- Salary and any fringe benefits for peers, which must be supported by time reporting
- Training for peers
- Travel expenses for peers, per State of Minnesota's [Commissioner's Plan](#)
- Communications expenses for peers
- Supplies and resources for peer use

### Additional Allowable Costs

Non-direct peer services include salary and any fringe benefits for the supervisor, managers, IBCLC, and back-up peer lead staff, and training and travel expenses for peer lead staff. The [Allowable Costs for Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs](#) chart is updated and distributed each fiscal year.

### Quarterly Claims for Reimbursement

A peer claims for reimbursement Excel file is emailed to peer programs at the beginning of each federal fiscal year. The instructions tab includes guidance for completing the claim and due dates.

### Claims for Reimbursement Schedule

First quarter claims for the period of October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> are due on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Second quarter claims for the period of January 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> are due April 20<sup>th</sup>. Third quarter claims for the period of April 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> are due July 20<sup>th</sup>. Fourth quarter and final claims for the period of July 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> are due December 20<sup>th</sup>.

### Financial Review

In compliance with Federal WIC regulations and the WIC and Peer Grant Agreement, Local Agencies receiving grant funds are subject to a financial review every other year. MDH staff will perform a review of one quarter's Peer Claim for Reimbursement, requesting from Local Agency administrative or financial staff documentation for costs claimed on the invoice/form. If further review is needed, additional documentation may be requested and/or an onsite visit may be conducted. The Local WIC Agency will be notified in writing of the results of the review and any follow-up action needed to resolve compliance issues identified.

### Thank You

## MODULE 5 : P E E R P R O G R A M

This is the end of module 5 – Peer Program Funding and Reimbursement. Please contact State Peer Coordinator, Kristen Bricko, at [kristen.bricko@state.mn.us](mailto:kristen.bricko@state.mn.us) with any questions.

### Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

#### Section 6.12 Peer Breastfeeding Support

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6\\_12.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6_12.pdf))

#### Section 1.14 Record Retention

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1\\_14.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch1/sctn1_14.pdf))

Commissioner's Plan (<https://mn.gov/mmb/employee-relations/labor-relations/labor/commissioners-plan.jsp>)

#### Allowable Costs for Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Programs

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/finance/peerallowable.pdf>)

Minnesota Department of Health - WIC Program, 85 E 7<sup>th</sup> Place, PO BOX 64882, ST PAUL MN 55164-0882; 1-800-657-3942, [health.wic@state.mn.us](mailto:health.wic@state.mn.us), [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us); to obtain this information in a different format, call: 1-800-657-3942.