

**SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR
WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)**

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

**LOVING SUPPORT: BUILDING BREASTFEEDING
COMPETENCIES FOR LOCAL WIC STAFF
“TRAIN-THE-TRAINER” TRAINING GUIDE**

CFDA #10.557

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY
July 16, 2008; 5 pm (EDT)**

**SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO:
CHARLES OKAL, CHIEF
GRANTS MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE, USDA
3101 PARK CENTER DRIVE, RM 738
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22302**

**Released by:
Supplemental Food Programs Division
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA**

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN,
INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

LIMITED APPLICATION REQUEST

INVITATION TO APPLY

**LOVING SUPPORT: BUILDING BREASTFEEDING
COMPETENCIES CURRICULUM FOR LOCAL WIC STAFF
“TRAIN-THE-TRAINER” TRAINING GUIDE**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) will fund a competitive cooperative agreement award of \$250,000 in Fiscal Year 2008 to a qualified applicant to: (1) Develop a “Train-the-Trainer” training guide with accompanying resources and materials based on a FNS competency-based breastfeeding curriculum for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program staff; (2) Provide this training to key WIC staff in each of the seven FNS geographical regions. Public Law 110-161, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2008, provides that funds are available for the purposes specified in section 17(h)(10)(B) of the Child Nutrition Act as amended. The intent of this project is to increase the knowledge base and skill set of local agency WIC staff in breastfeeding promotion and support by training key staff, by means of a “Train-the-Trainer” format, on the FNS competency-based breastfeeding curriculum, “*Loving Support: Building Breastfeeding Competencies Curriculum for Local WIC Staff*”. FNS will provide only one award under this solicitation. This application is available only to a limited number of vendors who meet eligibility criteria. The awardee will be selected on a competitive basis, based on an objective review of all proposals according to the technical evaluation criteria outlined in this Request For Applications. FNS has structured this award as a cooperative agreement and plans to work closely with the awardee throughout the duration of this project.

II. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

This is a competitive, limited solicitation. Only non-profit organizations, currently involved in the provision of breastfeeding education, training, or curriculum development are eligible to apply. **FNS will not consider applications from entities that do not fit these eligibility criteria.**

III. BACKGROUND

As part of its mission to improve the health of nutritionally at risk women, infants and children, the WIC Program provides breastfeeding promotion and support to its participants. WIC promotes breastfeeding as the optimal source of infant nutrition and funds are designated for education and support of breastfeeding activities. Breastfeeding provides a range of benefits for an infant's growth, immunity and development, and provides benefits for the mother such as earlier recovery from childbirth. Also, the bonding process is enhanced between mother, infant and family through the breastfeeding relationship. As a major public health nutrition and breastfeeding program, the WIC Program considers the social challenges that many of its mothers face. Several barriers to breastfeeding were identified through formative research conducted through the *Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work* campaign. The WIC Program addresses these barriers through its breastfeeding promotion, education, outreach and support efforts.

The WIC Reauthorization Act (Public Law 101-147) emphasized the importance of breastfeeding promotion and support in the WIC Program. Federal Regulations require:

- USDA to develop standards for State and local agencies to ensure adequate breastfeeding support has been established at the State and local levels;
- WIC to make yearly evaluations of breastfeeding promotion and support activities;
- WIC to collect data on the incidence and duration of breastfeeding among participants;
- Breastfeeding promotion and support to be incorporated into State Plans
- Designation of a breastfeeding coordinator to provide training and support to local agency staff responsible for breastfeeding promotion;
- WIC State agencies to provide training on breastfeeding promotion and support to local agency staff responsible for breastfeeding;
- WIC State agencies to provide nutrition education and breastfeeding materials in languages other than English as appropriate;

Various regulatory provisions have been put in place so WIC staff can encourage women to breastfeed and provide appropriate support. Consequently, all staff must have basic knowledge of breastfeeding and understand their roles and responsibilities in these efforts to effectively support the mission of the WIC Program. Competencies in breastfeeding promotion and support have become more essential for WIC staff with the new revisions to the WIC food packages. These packages were designed to better promote and support the establishment of successful long-term breastfeeding and strengthen WIC's breastfeeding promotion efforts. The changes reflect the Institute of Medicine's recommended revisions to the food packages for breastfeeding mothers and their infants, and are based on a thorough consideration of scientific research and public comments on how to promote and support breastfeeding in WIC. Emphasis is placed on support for the breastfeeding dyad as well as minimal supplementation with infant formula, especially

during the early weeks after birth, with the goal of establishing a mother's milk supply and continuing the breastfeeding relationship for as long as possible.

In 2003, Congress provided the WIC Program with funding to develop a peer counseling program. FNS developed a research-based peer counseling model for the purpose of implementing and expanding breastfeeding programs that provide mother-to-mother support, appropriate for the WIC clinic environment. This model program includes a peer counseling management training curriculum, "Using *Loving Support* to Manage Peer Counseling Programs." The model also includes a "train the trainer" curriculum: "Using *Loving Support* to Implement Best Practices in Peer Counseling."

Currently, a standardized competency-based curriculum is being developed by FNS which ensures that all staff, professionals as well as paraprofessionals, attain a level of proficiency in the skills required to promote and support breastfeeding in the WIC local agency clinic. This curriculum outlines competencies and skill sets appropriate for WIC local agency breastfeeding coordinators, WIC breastfeeding expert, competent professional authority (CPA), office clerks or other WIC staff who provide community-based breastfeeding leadership and education through the WIC Program. FNS recognizes the need for guidance on how this curriculum should be utilized for staff training as well as ways clinics can build upon the competencies provided in the curriculum to meet their own specific training needs and develop future breastfeeding trainings.

IV. PROJECT GOAL

In order to promote breastfeeding and provide WIC mothers the support they need to breastfeed successfully, **all** WIC staff who provide services to participants must be competent breastfeeding advocates.

The goals of this project are to:

- Develop a companion "Train-the-Trainer" training guide with accompanying resources and materials for the FNS breastfeeding curriculum, "*Loving Support: Building Breastfeeding Competencies Curriculum for Local WIC Staff*". This resource will serve as an implementation guide for training local agency staff based on the basic breastfeeding competencies outlined in the curriculum;
- Coordinate and conduct trainings based on the curriculum in a "Train-the-Trainer" format to key WIC State agency administrative staff, especially those responsible for staff training, in each of the seven FNS geographic regions. Providing this guidance in a "Train-the-Trainer" format will allow WIC State agencies to train their local agency staff in the competencies necessary to successfully promote and support breastfeeding. Coordination tasks include:
 - reserving a room for the trainings;

- making arrangements for audiovisual equipment;
- providing copies of the training guide and accompanying resources and materials (400 copies); and
- Provide technical assistance after training to State and local agency WIC staff upon request.

V. OPTIONAL TASK

The Agency (FNS), at its discretion, may issue an agreement modification or a separate delivery order to execute an optional task for the awardee to design and print 400 copies of the curriculum, “Loving Support: Building Breastfeeding Competencies Curriculum for Local WIC Staff”, in addition to the training guide and the accompanying resources and materials. The awardees’ recommendations and options for collateral materials may be further explored. If this option is selected, negotiations will be held depending on the availability of Federal funds.

VI. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

This cooperative agreement competition will support a proposal that:

- Clearly describes an innovative and effective method of developing a training guide based on the “Loving Support: Building Breastfeeding Competencies Curriculum for Local WIC Staff” curriculum;
- Takes into account the competencies outlined in the curriculum necessary for successful breastfeeding promotion and support at the WIC local agency level;
- Is consistent with “Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work” goals and “Using *Loving Support* to Manage Peer Counseling Programs” training curricula.

The proposal should address, but not be limited to the following competencies:

- Knowledge of evidence-based breastfeeding management skills;
- Knowledge of the WIC population and research that addresses the barriers that WIC mothers and families face;
- Knowledge of WIC breastfeeding goals, policies and procedures and Nutrition Services Standards;
- Knowledge of management of peer-counselor programs;
- Knowledge of culturally competent breastfeeding practices;
- Outreach skills and knowledge of community partnerships, role of coordination with other health care professionals, knowledge of community resources, health professional organizations and coalitions;

- Knowledge of staff roles and responsibilities related to promoting and supporting breastfeeding in the WIC Program;
- Knowledge of collecting and assessing biennial breastfeeding data, including familiarity with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance data and the WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Study;
- Basic knowledge of how to seek grant opportunities and/or management of grants;
- Skill in oral and written communication;
- Skill in breastfeeding assessment and documentation;
- Knowledge and skill in developing breastfeeding education classes;
- Knowledge and skill in instructional development and adult learning strategies.
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VII. SELECTION CRITERIA

Technical Approach

60%

The proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the purpose of the project and the goals of breastfeeding promotion and support within the public health community-based setting such as the WIC Program. The technical approach is appropriate to address the project goals.

The proposal demonstrates in-depth understanding of the WIC Program, its administration and management structure, and the community it serves.

The proposal considers the multi-cultural population that is served by the WIC Program.

Budget Plan

30%

The proposal includes a budget plan that is reasonable in relation to the scope and effort of the project. The budget plan demonstrates consistency with project objectives. A budget narrative provides details on how costs were derived and how and by whom funds will be spent.

History of Past Performance

10%

The proposal demonstrates evidence of completing comparable work on time and within cost; and includes references from past projects.

Total 100%

The award of this requirement will be made to the applicant whose proposal, when all criteria are considered, represents the best value to the Government.

VIII. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All costs under the grant awards are subject to the provisions of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) A-122, Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations, as well as USDA regulations.

This OMB Circular may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/>

Information about implementing circulars may be found at the following Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) citations:

- 7 CFR Part 3015: Uniform Federal Assistance Requirements;
- 7 CFR Part 3017, Subparts A-E: Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement);
- 7 CFR Part 3019: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations;
- 7 CFR Part 3021, Subpart F: Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance); and
- 7 CFR Part 3052: USDA Implementation of Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations.

The Code of Federal Regulations can be found at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>

IX. APPLICATION FORMAT

It is strongly suggested that applicants adhere to the following format. Use of this format will make it easier for the proposal reviewers to locate the requested information and to evaluate your proposal.

The original proposal must be ready for copying.

1. Technical Proposal:

- 8 pages maximum length, exclusive of resumes, letters of reference or materials from the application packet. FNS reserves the right to reject any application with a technical proposal exceeding 8 pages in length;
- single-sided;
- unstapled, unbound;
- on 8 ½" X 11" white paper;
- single-spaced text;

- at least 1” margins on top, bottom, and sides;
- 12-point New Times Roman font size;
- numbered pages;
- table of contents;
- one page proposal summary that describes proposal.

2. Appendices – to include only required supporting documentation that addresses the applicant’s capacity to carry out the proposed project. The maximum length is 8 pages.

- Resumes (limit to 2 pages per resume);
- Letters of reference;
- Budget Plan and Narrative.

X. APPLICATION DUE DATE

The completed application package must be **received** by FNS at the address listed below on or before 5:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) by July 16, 2008.

XI. FUNDING AND DURATION OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

This cooperative agreement will be funded for the period September 30, 2008 through September 30, 2009. Funding will be provided through the Grant Award Document/ Letter of Credit process, upon receipt of a properly executed cooperative agreement. All cooperative agreement funds must be obligated and all activities conducted under the cooperative agreement must be completed by September 30, 2009.

XII. SUBMIT APPLICATION

1. Submit application by hand delivery or by mail.

We advise that you meet the deadline by delivering the application or by mailing it sufficiently in advance of the deadline to ensure its timely receipt. **One original and two copies** must be submitted. The original copy must be ready for copying (i.e. single-sided, unstapled, unbound and on 8 ½ x 11 paper). If you opt to mail your application we strongly suggest using a mail delivery service that guarantees delivery and allows you to track delivery to FNS. **Also, FNS will not accept faxed or e-mailed applications.**

2. Late applications will not be considered in this competition. FNS will not consider additions or revisions to the application once it has been received.

3. Submit applications to:

Charles Okal, Chief
Grants Management Division
USDA Food and Nutrition Service
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 738
Alexandria, VA 22302