

DRAFT Phase I Recruitment Letter to Local WIC Clinics

Dear [Name of Local WIC Clinic Director]:

Your WIC Agency has nominated your clinic to participate in the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Study, which is being conducted by Abt Associates Inc. for the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (FNS). The goal of this study is to collect information on how *Loving Support* peer counseling has been implemented in States and Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) that have received FNS peer counseling grant funds. The information to be gathered will include the evolution of the local programs, challenges faced during implementation, strategies for addressing those challenges, and program expenditures.

Your WIC agency was selected as one of the local WIC Agencies with an operational peer counseling program to be included in the pilot study. We asked each of the participating local WIC agencies to identify WIC clinics that are implementing the *Loving Support* peer counseling model in a way that differs substantially from the way other clinics and service delivery sites in your agency are implementing it. We want to be able to learn more about these differences in order to get a complete sense of how *Loving Support* peer counseling is implemented in your community. Participation in this study is voluntary. A decision to participate will not affect your agency or your employment status. Nonetheless, we hope we can count on your clinic's participation.

The design, activities, and time frame for the fully implemented study are briefly described in the enclosed study overview. Participation would involve having an Abt senior staff member visit for part of one day to interview the clinic director, peer counselor supervisor, and peer counselors. On-site data collection will begin in [early/late Month]. Within the next two weeks, a study coordinator from Abt Associates will contact you to discuss your clinic's participation in the pilot study, provide more details about what participation would involve and, if you agree to participate, to begin the scheduling process. The confidentiality of all those responding will be protected to the full extent provided by law. If you have any questions about the study, you can contact me at 301-634-1833 or joan_mclaughlin@abtassoc.com. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, please call Marianne Beauregard at 617-492-7100 or e-mail marianne_beauregard@abtassoc.com. Calls made to these numbers may require a toll.

I hope that you can support us in this effort. The findings from the study will be used to disseminate information on implementing the *Loving Support* peer counseling model; assess technical assistance and training needs; and provide information to FNS and other stakeholders demonstrating how State agencies are using the peer counseling grant funding. Reports will not name specific agencies or identify respondents by name or location.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joan E. McLaughlin, Ph.D.
Project Director for the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Study
Abt Associates Inc.