

DRAFT Phase I Recruitment Letter to Nominated Collaborating Organizations

Dear [Name of Collaborating Organization Contact]:

The Director of the local WIC Agency in your area has nominated your organization to participate in the pilot study for 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). This important study will 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 we will gather includes the evolution of the local programs, challenges faced during implementation, strategies for addressing those challenges, program expenditures, and collaborations with other organizations.

The local WIC agency that you are working with as part of their *Loving Support* peer counseling effort is one of the selected local WIC Agencies with an operational *Loving Support* peer counseling program that has agreed to participate in the study. Each selected local WIC agency was asked to nominate one collaborating organization that works closely with the peer counseling program staff. Participation is voluntary. The information needed for this study can only be provided by local WIC agencies and their associated collaborative organizations. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent provided by law. A decision to participate will not affect your agency or your employment status. We hope we can count on your organization's participation.

The study design, activities, and time frame are briefly described in the enclosed study overview. Your participation will involve an interview with a senior staff member from Abt Associates, which will last about an hour. If possible, we would like to conduct this visit while we are on site, so that we can see your organization first hand. However, if your schedule does not permit this, we can do the interview by phone. On-site data collection will begin [name the general date].

Within the next two weeks, a study coordinator from Abt Associates will contact you to discuss your participation in the study and, if you agree to participate, ask about your schedule. In the meantime, if you have questions about the study, you may call or e-mail 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 you will agree to participate. 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. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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