



United
States
Department
of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Alexandria, VA
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«Date»

«Contact»
«Address_Line_1»
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«Address_Line_5»
«Address_Line_6»
«City»«, State» «ZIP»

Dear «Contact»:

As you may recall, The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is conducting a national study of the *Loving Support* Peer Counseling program; Abt Associates is conducting this study for FNS. Your agency took part in Phase 1 of this study by completing an online survey in 2008, and the results of that survey, along with other findings, were reported in June, 2010. The purpose of this letter is to ask for your help again. Specifically, we are asking you and other relevant staff working on *Loving Support* peer counseling at the State level to participate in a second round of this web-based survey.

Since the first survey about the implementation of *Loving Support* at the State level, approximately six years have elapsed and funding for the *Loving Support* Peer Counseling program increased from approximately \$15 million to approximately \$60 million. This second round of the survey will help FNS understand how State agencies have used these additional funds and what changes State agencies may have made in the policy guidance, training procedures, and monitoring they provide to local agencies with *Loving Support* Peer Counseling programs.

The survey will again be web-based and will ask State Agencies about how *Loving Support* peer counseling is being implemented. Specifically, it includes questions about State agency staff that work on *Loving Support* peer counseling, training, support, and policy guidance that the State agency provides to local agencies, and what types of data the State agencies collect from local Agencies about their *Loving Support* Peer Counseling programs. In response to feedback received during the first round of the survey, we have shortened the length of the survey overall and clarified questions that proved confusing. The survey takes about 120 minutes to complete. Multiple respondents at your agency can access the survey, allowing the most suitable agency member to respond to certain questions, and respondents can save their responses and return at a later time to the survey, allowing the survey to be completed

as time allows. Privacy will be protected to the “extent provided by law.” Please note that this study is not part of an audit or management review of WIC operations, but that FNS may identify your State agency by name in any reports based on this survey. A decision to participate will not affect your agency or your employment status.

Study staff from Abt Associates will be contacting you in the next few days by e-mail (or phone if they have trouble reaching you by e-mail) to provide you with your unique password to access the survey and offer any technical assistance you may need to complete the survey.

In the meantime, please contact me at 703-305-2732 or by email at Karen.Castellanos-Brown@fns.usda.gov or the Project Director at Abt Associates, Carter Epstein, if you have any questions about the survey. She may be reached toll-free at 1-855-311-2461 or WICPEERC@abtassoc.com.

Your timely participation in this study effort is very much appreciated and is critical to the success of the study and to the Peer Counseling program. The surveys need to be completed by <<INSERT DATE>>. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Karen Castellanos-Brown
Social Science Research Analyst
Office of Policy Support, Special Nutrition Research and Analysis Division
USDA, Food and Nutrition Service

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