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**USDA Food and Nutrition Service: WIC *Loving Support* Campaign  
Attachment B**

Guide for in-depth interviews with WIC state breastfeeding coordinators

**Objectives**

- Understand the perceptions of WIC state breastfeeding coordinators regarding WIC moms' knowledge and beliefs about breastfeeding
- Learn about the nature and context of interactions about breastfeeding between WIC state breastfeeding coordinators, local WIC staff and breastfeeding peer counselors, and the WIC moms they support
- Explore state breastfeeding coordinators' views on the barriers, motivations, and opportunities for WIC moms who are making breastfeeding decisions
- Gain insight into the factors that influence and/or determine WIC moms' self-efficacy to initiate and continue exclusive breastfeeding
- Explore what breastfeeding supports are most and/or least effective for WIC moms
- Understand what resources and tactics WIC state breastfeeding coordinators find to be most and least valuable in supporting local WIC staff and peer counselors
- Learn about barriers, motivations, and opportunities for state breastfeeding coordinators to work successfully with local WIC staff and peer counselors

**I. Introductions/Setup (5 minutes)**

Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ with Hager Sharp, a social marketing firm working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) WIC program to update a campaign about breastfeeding. Is this still a good time for you? **[IF NOT, RESCHEDULE]**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. We would like to ask you some questions about your experiences as a WIC state breastfeeding coordinator. Specifically, we are interested in your perceptions of the WIC moms enrolled in your state and the support they receive from local WIC staff and peer counselors. We will be asking you questions about how much the WIC moms in your state know about breastfeeding, what factors encourage or motivate them to breastfeed, what challenges they face in starting and continuing to breastfeed, and what opportunities may exist to support breastfeeding among these women.

This call will take no more than one hour. If we get interrupted, or we need to stop and resume later, we can do so. There are no penalties for not participating in whole or in part. If there are any questions that you do not feel confident to answer, just let me know and we will move on. Everything you say will remain private and will not be share with anyone outside the researchers involved in this data collection, except as otherwise required by law, but we will combine your comments with those of other state breastfeeding coordinators in a report that we will provide to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. The USDA will not be able to attribute your comments to you personally.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Please be candid and provide as much insight as you are comfortable sharing. Your feedback is important to us. I will be taking notes during our conversation and, because we want to make sure we don't miss any comments, I would also like to record our conversation. **[TURN RECORDING ON]**

## II. Your Role as State Breastfeeding Coordinator (15 minutes)

1. How long have you been a WIC state breastfeeding coordinator?
2. How many WIC moms are currently receiving breastfeeding support in your state?
  - a. Describe the state agency policies surrounding the number of contacts local agency staff and peer counselors make to support a WIC mom.
3. Now I'd like to ask you to briefly tell me about the WIC moms in your state:
  - a. What racial/ethnic groups make up the majority of WIC moms in your state?
  - b. What is the age range of WIC moms in your state?
  - c. Are there any qualities that make WIC moms in your state different from other WIC moms around the U.S.? For example, are there unique cultural barriers or supports?
    - If so, is there anything that you do to address those specific differences/strengths/challenges in your role as a WIC state breastfeeding coordinator?
  - d. How are WIC moms typically referred to WIC breastfeeding support? What is the most effective way to encourage WIC moms to seek and/or use WIC breastfeeding support?
  - e. What is the best way to reach WIC moms (e.g., via telephone, Facebook, text, etc.)?
4. What direct contact do you have with the WIC moms' support system (e.g., fathers, partners, family members, health care providers, employers, other lactation support providers)?
5. Do local agencies in your state currently use any materials or resources from the state agency to explain the benefits of breastfeeding initiation, exclusivity, and duration to WIC moms? If so, please describe.
  - a. Which resources are most used by local agency staff and peer counselors?
  - b. Are there any resources, tools, or support you wish you had available to help local agency staff and peer counselors talk to WIC moms about breastfeeding? **[PROVIDE PROMPTS, IF NECESSARY]**
    - Ex: breastfeeding app, websites, listservs, etc.
  - c. Are there any community partners that help you in providing support to WIC moms? If so, which ones have been particularly effective?
6. Are there aspects of promoting and supporting breastfeeding that you find frustrating? What obstacles or other problems related to promoting and supporting breastfeeding are a source of frustration for you?
7. What change(s) could help you support more WIC moms to successfully breastfeed?

### III. Knowledge of Breastfeeding (5 minutes)

*Now I'd like to ask you about breastfeeding knowledge among the WIC moms in your state.*

8. In your experience, which area—biology, benefits, skills, rights, sources of support—is most important to include in efforts to increase breastfeeding knowledge and skills among WIC moms?

**[PROVIDE PROMPTS, IF NECESSARY]**

- Biology: how mother's body makes milk, i.e., lets down milk before or during a breastfeeding session, produces milk in response to supply and demand
- Benefits: nutritional value, maternal/infant bonding, cost savings, health benefits for mom and baby, convenience, protecting the baby from illnesses, protecting the baby from developing allergies, helping the baby to gain the right amount of weight
- Skills: positions, latch, how often to feed and for how long, baby's hunger signs, signs of baby getting enough milk, pumping and storing milk
- Rights: break time for nursing moms at work (how often and location), breastfeeding in public
- Support: emotional – fathers, partners, family, etc.; informational – health care providers, WIC support, etc.

9. In your experience, which area – biology, benefits, skills, rights, sources of support – is least important to include in efforts to increase breastfeeding knowledge and skills among WIC moms?

### IV. Motivations and Barriers around Breastfeeding (20 minutes)

*Now I'd like to ask a few questions about what factors encourage or motivate WIC moms to breastfeed and what challenges these mothers typically face in starting and continuing to exclusively breastfeed and/or combination feed (i.e., combination of infant formula and human milk).*

10. What breastfeeding data is tracked/monitored for your state?

11. What are some reasons why the WIC moms in your state want to start/initiate breastfeeding?

- a. Do you know why these reasons motivated/encouraged them to start breastfeeding?

12. If they don't intend to breastfeed, what are the reasons?

13. What are the reasons why the WIC moms in your state continue breastfeeding?

- a. Do they mention different motivations for exclusive breastfeeding (i.e., feeding their child only breast milk) versus breastfeeding with supplementation (i.e., replacing a portion of breast milk with formula)?

- What reasons lead them to start formula feeding when they are already breastfeeding?

- Do local staff and peer counselors find it difficult to convince moms to exclusively breastfeed (versus combination feed)?

- b. Do you know why these reasons motivated/encouraged them to continue breastfeeding?

- c. Do you know why these reasons motivated/encouraged them to continue exclusive breastfeeding?

14. Who supports WIC moms in meeting their breastfeeding goal?

- a. What role do partners, family members, or other supporters play in a WIC mom's motivations or barriers to exclusive breastfeeding success?

15. What concerns about breastfeeding do WIC moms face...

- a. Prenatally?
- b. At birth?
- c. In the first two weeks at home with the baby?
- d. Upon a return to work/school?
- e. Other?

16. What challenges do WIC moms face in initiating breastfeeding? Are there any unique challenges faced by WIC moms in your state, in particular? **[PROVIDE PROMPTS/EXAMPLES, IF NECESSARY]**

- Ex: pain, supply issues, engorgement, plugged ducts/infection, latch issues, lack of support, embarrassment
  - a. How do these challenges change over time for women who continue breastfeeding?
  - b. In what ways do WIC moms overcome these challenges?

**V. Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy and Opportunities (10 minutes)**

17. In your state, what are some factors that affect a mother's belief that she can succeed (self-efficacy) in initiating breastfeeding?

18. What are some factors that affect a mother's belief that she can succeed in continuing exclusive breastfeeding?

19. What, if anything, do you believe WIC could do to improve opportunities for mothers to breastfeed? **[PROVIDE PROMPTS/EXAMPLES, IF NECESSARY]**

- Ex: in public, in the workplace, in hospital settings, in other settings

**VI. Overall Information & Wrap Up (5 minutes)**

20. Now that we've spent some time talking about breastfeeding among WIC moms, where do you see the biggest opportunities to make a difference in encouraging WIC moms to initiate and continue exclusive breastfeeding?

- a. What recommendations do you have for USDA to improve breastfeeding support to WIC moms?

21. Is there anything else you would like to discuss that didn't come up?

Thank you so much; your help has been invaluable.