

Q&A ON ALLOWABLE COSTS FOR A PEER COUNSELING PROGRAM

Below is a list of questions and answers on allowable costs for the peer counseling program. This is not an exhaustive list. If you do not see an answer to your question, please call the state WIC office.

May we use these funds to pay for the salaries of our dual-role staff when they are performing peer counseling duties? These staff perform clerical or CPA duties part-time and peer counseling duties part-time to equal a full-time job.

Yes. The peer counseling funds can be used for these dual-role staff only if these staff meet the criteria for peer counselor as outlined Section 1. The Peer Counseling funds are intended to take programs beyond current operations and improve services offered to WIC clients, e.g. making peer counseling services available outside usual clinic hours and outside the WIC clinic environment. When determining how you may want to use these funds, don't think in terms of how your program is currently being operated, but how this program can be used to fill the gaps in breastfeeding support to WIC clients.

Is childcare an allowable cost under the peer counseling funds?

No. Childcare is not an allowable cost.

May the peer counseling funds be used to train peer counselors to become International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs)?

Yes. Research on peer counseling program recommends that peer counselors be provided career path options such as getting the training or experience to become senior level peer counselors or advanced training to become lactation consultants. However, the priority use of these funds is to hire and train peer counselors to provide breastfeeding peer counseling services to WIC clients.

May the peer counseling funds be used to increase the number of IBCLCs?

Yes. Funds may be used to increase access of lactation management experts available to peer counselors. However, the funds cannot be used to disproportionately hire and train lactation management experts versus peer counselors. The priority use of these funds is to hire and train peer counselors to provide breastfeeding peer counseling services to WIC clients.

May the peer counseling funds be used to pay for the IBCLC exam?

No. The funds may not be used for the exam itself.

May we purchase breastfeeding incentive items with these funds for the purpose of encouraging our moms to breastfeed? Can May funds be used to develop hospital discharge bags to give to moms in the hospital?

No. The intent of the funds is to enhance WIC breastfeeding support services to WIC clients through peer counseling, not to pay for incentive items and other materials for WIC clients. Regular breastfeeding or other funds may be used for this purpose. The peer counselor may, however, provide these items to WIC participants in the course of her peer counseling contacts.

Would it be an allowable cost to produce a handout on the peer counseling program to publicize the efforts?

Yes. The funds may be used to produce and distribute a handout to educate WIC clients about the peer counseling program. However, educational materials to promote breastfeeding are to be paid out of regular breastfeeding funds.

May program indirect costs be included as allowable expenses?

Yes.

May we purchase shirts that identify the staff as peer counselors with this money?

Yes. However, these funds are primarily to be used to provide breastfeeding support services to WIC clients, not simply to purchase items and materials.

May the funds be used to install a phone line or purchase answering machines, prepaid cell phones, or pagers for peer counselors?

Yes.

May we buy breastfeeding resources for the peer counselor lead with this money?

Yes. Breastfeeding resources for the peer counselor lead may be purchased with this funding, however only if the resources are related to peer counseling, e.g., training manuals for peer counselors.

May we buy resources for other WIC clinic staff?

No. Breastfeeding resources for peer counselor leads and other WIC staff should be paid for through regular breastfeeding funds.

May our nutrition coordinator perform the duties of a peer counselor lead if we then hire someone else to perform the nutrition coordinator duties with other WIC funds?

Yes.

Can funds be used to hire a peer counselor to staff a breastfeeding hotline? And can the funds be used to pay for expenses related to the hotline?

Funds can be used to hire a peer counselor to answer calls to a hotline or call center if the peer counselor receives the appropriate training and supervision. Expenses related to the hotline/call center are allowable for any portion of those expenses that are for the purpose of a peer counselor providing participant contacts.

Can the funds be used to purchase portable cribs for peer counselors who bring their babies to work?

No. The peer counseling funds cannot be used to purchase equipment/materials for the infants of peer counselors.

Can we purchase furniture and computers for peer counselors?

The primary purpose of the funds is to provide breastfeeding support services to WIC clients. The funds may be used to purchase office equipment and furniture if these items are necessary to provide these services.

Can we use these funds to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of our peer counseling program?

No. The peer counseling funds are not to be used for evaluation.

Can we use the funds to provide light refreshments to clients during group nutrition education sessions?

Light refreshments can be provided to clients (not staff) during a nutrition education session as long as they are made with WIC approved foods and are a part of the session's content on how to eat a healthy diet.

For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats.
To submit a request, please call 1-800-841-1410 (TDD/TTY 1-800-833-6388).

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