



NATIONAL WIC ASSOCIATION

Six Steps to Achieve Breastfeeding Goals for WIC Clinics

NWA recognizes the ongoing commitment of WIC staff to improving and sustaining breastfeeding rates. The Six Steps to Achieve Breastfeeding Goals for WIC Clinics are an integral part of the **NWA** Breastfeeding Strategic Plan to assist agencies to achieve these goals.

Goals:

- To offer practical suggestions to Increase exclusive breastfeeding initiation and duration among WIC participants.
- To promote and create internal and external environments that support exclusive breastfeeding.

Steps for WIC Clinics:

1. Present exclusive breastfeeding as the norm for all mothers and babies.
 - a. Recognize and encourage human milk as the perfect food for all infants.
 - b. Support mothers in setting and reaching their exclusive breastfeeding goals.
 - c. Develop staff training to achieve consistent education for mothers.
 - d. Encourage breastfeeding at all nutrition contacts beginning with prenatal enrollment.
 - e. Promote the food package incentives for breastfeeding women
 - f. Collaborate with community partners to promote exclusive breastfeeding as the norm.
2. Provide an appropriate breastfeeding-friendly environment.
 - a. Become a Breastfeeding Friendly WIC Clinic by striving to meet the International Code of the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/code_english.pdf)
 - b. Encourage mothers to breastfeed anywhere in the clinic. Provide a private area only upon request of the mother.
 - c. Facilitate breastfeeding support groups at the WIC site.
 - d. Provide breastfeeding equipment, as available, following appropriate assessment by trained and qualified staff.
 - e. Train staff how to assemble, clean, and issue equipment appropriately.
 - f. Provide consistent breastfeeding education, education materials, and hands-on help both prenatally and during the post partum period.
 - g. Ensure management fully promotes, encourages and supports staff in their personal efforts to breastfeed.

NWA's mission: providing leadership to promote quality nutrition services; advocating for services for all eligible women, infants and children; and assuring the sound and responsive management of WIC.

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3. Ensure access to competently trained breastfeeding staff at each WIC clinic site.
 - a. Train certifying professionals to provide a thorough assessment and appropriate support of the mother's breastfeeding plans and educational needs throughout the prenatal and postpartum period.
 - b. Encourage and support breastfeeding education and training for staff to pursue advanced credentialing in breastfeeding.

4. Develop procedures to accommodate breastfeeding mothers and babies.
 - a. Allow adequate time for assessment, evaluation, and assistance to resolve breastfeeding problems.
 - b. Address all breastfeeding concerns in a timely manner.
 - c. Explore collaborative efforts to provide a breastfeeding warm line with competently trained staff who respond to questions in a timely manner.
 - d. Support breastfeeding mothers and respond to breastfeeding questions outside of formal nutrition education sessions.

5. Mentor and train **all** staff to become competent breastfeeding advocates and/or counselors.
 - a. Provide lactation management education including on-going continuing education.
 - b. Allow adequate clinic time for hands on mentorship.
 - c. Train all staff in the skills to assess a breastfeeding dyad.

6. Support exclusive breastfeeding through assessment, evaluation, and assistance.
 - a. Provide staff access to at least one International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) for referral and mentorship.
 - b. Maximize utilization of mentored and trained Breastfeeding Peer Counselors.
 - c. Provide breastfeeding classes and/or one-on-one education for all pregnant and breastfeeding women by competently trained breastfeeding staff.

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