Memorandum

#21-093

TO: WIC Regional Directors
    WIC Local Agency Directors

FROM: Amanda Hovis, Director
    Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit
    Nutrition Services Section

DATE: October 14, 2021

SUBJECT: 2022 application period for the WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence

The 2022 application period for the WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence opened on October 12th and closes on December 17th.

Local agencies that have operated a peer counseling program for at least one year that meet all of the required core components of the WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling are eligible to apply.

Link for the award application and instructions can be found at: https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-award-excellence-program.

As a reminder, awards are valid for 4 years and the count starts the year the application was awarded. Local Agencies with awards prior to 2019 would need to complete a new application with all the supportive documentation for the Gold application.

It is also encouraged that 2021 awardees reapplying for a higher award submit their full Gold application and documentation. In the event that a Local Agency does not meet the requirements of the higher award, they could still be evaluated and receive a Gold award if all criteria are met.

The PowerPoint for technical assistance, “Application Assistance for Local WIC Agencies”, is attached.

Thank you!

Further questions, please contact Asia Sartor, Peer Counselor Coordinator at asia.sartor@hhs.texas.gov or 512-552-1601.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence

Application Assistance for Local WIC Agencies
Who can apply?

The 2022 application period opens on October 12 and closes on December 17

Local WIC Agencies

- Listed in WIC Local Agency Directory Report, Form FNS–648
- Operated a peer counseling program for at least 1 year
- Peer counseling program must meet all of the required core components of the WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling.
What are the awards?

• Gold Award

• Premiere Award (midlevel award)

• Elite Award (highest level award)
Documents Needed

Download the following documents from the FNS website to access the application materials: https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-award-excellence-program

• Gold Application
• Gold Application Instructions
• Premiere and Elite Application
• Premiere and Elite Application Instructions
• FAQ’s
Gold Award Application & Instructions

WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence
Gold Award Application

Cover Sheet

Local Agency Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip code
Email
Date

WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence
Gold Award Application Instructions

There are 3 Award Levels: Gold, Premiere, and Elite.

Gold Award Questions: In order to be eligible for any level of award, applicants must fulfill the criteria for all the Gold Award questions.

The Gold Award application has a total of 30 questions. The Gold Award questions, worth 1 point each, are criteria identified as best practices, which demonstrate excellence in breastfeeding practices and support, and relate to practices beyond the core components of the WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling.

Premiere and Elite Award Questions: The Premiere and Elite application has 16 questions. The Premiere and Elite questions are each worth 2 or 3 points. The questions for these higher level awards are criteria identified as exemplary practices that are deserving of the highest recognition of excellence. An applicant may fill out the Gold Award application and choose not to complete the combined application for the Premiere and Elite awards.

Performance data: Applicant does not submit performance data. The performance data considered is the rate of exclusively breastfed infants reported by local WIC agencies and published annually on the FNS website. Performance data is considered for the Premiere and Elite Awards. Evaluators will use the most recent data posted on the FNS website.
Gold Award Prescreening Questions

Instructions

In order to apply for an award of excellence, your local agency must first be able to answer “Yes” to the following two questions.

1. Has your local agency peer counseling program been in place for at least one year? Check Yes on the application if appropriate.

2. Does your local agency peer counseling program meet ALL of the components of the WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling, as listed below? Check Yes on the application if appropriate.

WIC BREASTFEEDING MODEL FOR PEER COUNSELING REQUIRED PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Program Management
- The local agency has a designated peer counseling program manager or coordinator.
- The local agency has standardized breastfeeding peer counseling program policies in place as part of its nutrition education plan.
Documentation & Narrative Explanation

**Documentation**

Some questions in this application require additional documents. There are two types of document requests, a narrative and/or supportive documentation.

**Narrative** refers to a document with explanatory statements that have been written exclusively for the purpose of this application. The narrative should describe how your agency meets the criteria of a specific question as noted in the instructions. *Narratives are not to exceed 500 words.*

**Supportive documentation** refers to documents that already exist. The preferred source of documentation are locally developed policies, procedures, MOU’s, etc.; however, State and Federal documentation is also acceptable. You may submit these documents to demonstrate your agency meets the criteria of a specific question as noted in the instructions for that question.

When attaching documentation, indicate the page number(s) where the specific information can be found in response to the question. Each document you attach to the application must have a unique name/title entered into the application. The title should reflect the content of the document. For example, supportive documentation for Question 2 can be named, "Q2.After Hours Policies." Do not submit entire policy and procedure manuals.

If you submit the same document for more than one question, enter the same document title again, and indicate the page number(s) that corresponds to the specific question.
2. Do you have a protocol that describes how peer counselors address a mother's concerns and needs outside of usual clinic hours, including how peer counselors make after-hour referrals? Attach supportive documentation. Fill in the document title and indicate the page number(s) where the information that answers this question can be found.

**Document Title**

**Page Number(s)**

If "No", enter "n/a"
Gold Award
Evaluation & Scoring

• 30 points
• All questions are required
• Performance data is not considered
Submitting the Gold Award Application

• A complete Gold award application includes:
  – Cover sheet with the Agency information
  – Responds to all 30 questions
  – .ZIP files and attached documentation

• Upload complete Gold application to https://spaces.hightail.com/uplink/WWRS
Previous Gold Awardees

• Awards are valid for 4 years.
• Past Gold Awardees applying to a higher level award will submit a Gold Application with:
  – Cover Page
  – Prescreening Questions
  – Checklist
  – Verification of the Gold Application
Previous Gold Awardees

## Previous Gold Awardees

Please review the checklist prior to submitting application and supportive documentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Gold Awardees</th>
<th>Year Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please fill out the year your local agency received the Gold award.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verify the following has been completed:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cover sheet, p1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Prescreening, p2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Checklist, p6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue on to the application for the Premiere and Elite Awards to apply for a higher level award.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## New Applicants

All 30 questions need to be answered “Yes” to be eligible for the Gold Award. Verify that all questions have been answered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Applicants</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Premiere & Elite Award

WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence
Premiere and Elite Award Application

Cover Sheet

Local Agency Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
Email Address
Date

WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence
Premiere/Elite Award Application Instructions

There are 3 Award Levels: Gold, Premiere, and Elite.

Gold Award Questions: In order to be eligible for any level of award applicants must fulfill the criteria for all the Gold Award questions.

The Gold Award application has a total of 30 questions. The Gold Award questions, worth 1 point each, are criteria identified as best practices, which demonstrate excellence in breastfeeding practices and support, and relate to practices beyond the core components of WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling.

Premiere and Elite Award Questions: The Premiere and Elite application has 16 questions. The Premiere and Elite questions are equally weight 2 or 3 points. The questions for these higher level awards are criteria identified as exemplary practices that are deserving of the highest recognition of excellence. An applicant may fill out only the Gold award application and choose not to complete the combined application for the Premiere and Elite awards.

Performance data: Applicant does not submit performance data. The performance data considered is the rate of exclusively breastfed infants reported by local WIC agencies and published annually on the FNS website. Performance data is considered for the Premiere and Elite Awards. Evaluators will use the most recent data posted on the FNS website.
Prescreening for Premiere & Elite Awards

Loving Support Award of Excellence - Premiere and Elite Application

DOWNLOAD AND SAVE INSTRUCTIONS FROM FNS PUBLIC WEBSITE BEFORE BEGINNING THE APPLICATION. In order to be eligible to apply for an award, your local agency must first be able to verify the following question:

1. Have you completed the Gold Award application and documentation?

   Yes ☐  No ☐

Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEER COUNSELING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you have established guidelines for how many hours of observation/shadowing is required as part of peer counseling training/continuing education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes ☐  No ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation and Scoring for the Combined Premiere & Elite Application

16 questions
  • each worth 2 or 3 points (see points in the instructions)

3 areas
  • Peer Counseling
  • Partnerships
  • Other Criteria

Performance data considered
  • Check the WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Report to see if you meet the criteria prior to completing the application
  • You *do not* upload your performance data
Performance Data

• Participant data for fully breastfed infant food package participation, expressed as a percentage of total infant participants in each local agency

• Check rates prior to applying for Premiere and Elite

• WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Report
  
Premiere Application Evaluation & Scoring

Premiere Application Questions

- 20 points in addition to Gold Application points
  - a minimum of 12 points from the Peer Counseling section
  - a minimum of 4 points from the Partnership section
  - a minimum of 4 points from the Other Criteria section

Premiere Award Performance Data

- 15 % or higher of the infants are exclusively breastfed in the previous year of published data, and the most recently published year of data shows an increase over the previous year OR
- the rate of exclusively breastfed infants is at least 25 % or higher in the most recently published year of data
Elite Application Evaluation & Scoring

• Gold Application points
• ALL points from the Peer Counseling section, Partnership section, and Other Criteria section on the Premiere/Elite application
• Performance Data
  • the rate of exclusively breastfed infants is 40% or higher
Submitting the Application(s) & Supportive Documentation

Please combine/compress all of your documents into one .zip file, and name the .zip file to indicate your WIC agency.

https://spaces.hightail.com/uplink/WWRS
Technical Assistance

• Frequently Asked Questions on the FNS Website
  https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-award-excellence-program

• Email your State Agency for assistance with Application questions, supportive documentation, narratives and/or instructions

• Email WICHQ-SFPD@fns.usda.gov for assistance with downloading/uploading application and documents, or further clarification and technical assistance
Thank you

Best of luck on your application!