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Connecticut WIC Program Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Implementation Plan- 2017 Update for FY 2018 State Plan

State Program Overview and Update:

The Connecticut WIC Program established a hybrid-peer counseling model with support from the USDA WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling funding. The two hospital-based WIC peer counseling programs are located in the diverse, urban cities of Hartford and New Haven. The Program also operates WIC clinic-based peer counseling in three local agencies with International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) on staff or contracted to mentor the peer counselors. Since April 2016, a State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator has been part of the WIC Breastfeeding Unit. The State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator is IBCLC, RD and brought her experience, managing a WIC-clinic based peer counseling program in Fair Haven, to the State agency. FY 2017 was the first year that Peer Counseling was included in the new WIC MIS, known as CT-WIC, as part of the Peer Counseling Module. For many reasons, the bulk of FY 2017 was spent working out bugs in the module by having our most experienced peer counselor (Digna- Fair Haven), test out use of the modules and screens. By the third quarter of 2017, we were able to have our two (2) other WIC-clinic based peer programs start working in CT-WIC. Due to logistics and personnel changes, we held off on implementing CT-WIC in the two (2) hospital-based peer programs until FY 2018. We also are actively working on developing CT-WIC reports for staff, program management and monitoring. We are planning to incorporate formal monitoring one of peer counseling programs into the bi-annual WIC Management Evaluation Review in FY 2018.

Both the WIC-hospital based and WIC-clinic based models operate using USDA's 10 components to *Loving Support® Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together – For WIC Managers and Loving Support® Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together – For Training WIC Peer Counselors* at their core. Each type of program uses or has adapted protocols originally created by the Hispanic Health Council (HHC) and Hartford Hospital for the program that was established in 1993 with an initial grant award from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT-DPH). Based on the FY 2016 WIC Peer Counseling Management Training event at the FNS Regional Office in Boston, MA we have begun the process of updating

contract language and protocols to reflect new information, specifically providing more clarification on the definition of a peer counselor and the scope of practice. The following is a brief history and evolution of Connecticut's peer counseling program as it responds to new research and fluctuations in available resources.

BREASTFEEDING HERITAGE AND PRIDE: HISPANIC HEALTH COUNCIL AND HARTFORD HOSPITAL PROGRAM

The *Breastfeeding, Heritage and Pride* (BHP) breastfeeding peer counseling program was initially funded through a grant received by the CT-DPH Department of Public Health in 1993. It continues to be jointly operated by the Hispanic Health Council and Hartford Hospital. In 2005, using USDA WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling funds, CT-DPH entered into a contract with the HHC to expand the BHP program to include two additional full time peer counselors and administrative support. A 2004, CDC-funded, randomized, controlled trial of the BHP (*Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med 2004; 158:897-902*) concluded that peer counselors can significantly improve breastfeeding initiation rates and have an impact on breastfeeding rates at 1 and 3 months post partum.

2017 Update

Currently the Hispanic Health Council (HHC) has 2 FTE in Peer Counselors and .2 FTE of their IBCLC. The IBCLC currently at Hispanic Health Council comes with experience from Newborn Intensive Care setting in addition to well-baby nursery. She has learned the HHC documentation system quickly since she was hired in the 2nd quarter of FY 17. The program continues with 1.5 FTE of Hispanic bilingual Peer Counselors who have been with the program for well over 5 years, the newest addition to the team was added in the 2nd quarter, works .5 FTE, is Hispanic and bilingual as well.

We learned in FY 2016 that HHC based peers were serving participants from Connecticut WIC local agencies other than Hartford WIC Program, including East Hartford and New Britain/Bristol programs. The reason for this is that Hartford Hospital and St. Francis Hospital, partner with HHC BHP Program. When moms deliver at either of these facilities, they may be referred to peer counseling program, after delivery. When we learned about this, we contacted the local agency Breastfeeding Coordinators for these agencies and requested that they come to training on peer counseling to enhance coordination. Now, WIC staff from outlying Hartford towns are able to use CT-WIC to monitor Peer Counseling contacts made by HHC peers for these participants. This adds a rich layer of coordinated care for families. Currently, these programs do not refer to peer counseling during pregnancy however we have plans to continue to enhance peer counseling in these WIC agencies in the coming years. A short-term goal would be to explore having the HHC peers set up regular office hours at both Hartford locations.

The State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator, CT DPH IT consultants and HHC IT Consultants worked collaboratively to set up HHC staff with laptops, printers, signature pads and VPN tokens. Traditionally, HHC has communicated with Hartford WIC Program via email or phone. Finally, in 1st quarter of FY 2018, use of CT-WIC Peer Counseling modules will begin. This access will allow for more comprehensive care for participants and lead to increased communication between the Peer Counseling Program and WIC offices.

HHC has continued to require a substantial amount of technical assistance during FY 2017. Primarily, support has focused on facilitating open communication and seamless transition to CT-WIC. Other visits were conducted with Hartford WIC staff and HHC Peer Counseling staff on strategies to have Peer Counselors at Hartford WIC orientation classes and prenatal feeding classes.

Hartford Hospital (HH), which was the state's first Baby-Friendly hospital, continues to fund and one peer position that is integrated into HHC. We are discussions about some restructuring of peer positions to better accommodate both in-patient and community needs. Updated contract language and budget were also completed in FY 2017.

The most recent quarterly report for the HHC program is attached.

BREASTFEEDING HERITAGE AND PRIDE: YALE NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL PROGRAM

In 2009, the BHP model of peer counseling was expanded to Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH). The program was originally established using WIC Nutrition Services and Administration (NSA) funding and was planned to staff one full-time Lactation Specialist, Peer Counseling Coordinator and 2 full-time peer counselors. The program is primarily funded with Connecticut's USDA WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling grant and some resources from YNHH.

2017 Update

The Program has been short staffed since the beginning of FY 17. The 3rd quarter of FY17 one past Peer Counselor has returned on a per diem status to support caseload. Another part time Peer Counselor started the 3rd quarter, both are Hispanic and bilingual. Our African American Peer Counselor has gone from full time to part time during the 3rd quarter of this year as well. This personnel change, will allow for a new part time Peer Counselor to start in the coming months. When fully staffed the New Haven WIC Peer Counseling Program will have 3 FTEs. The IBCLC provides 5 hour per week of oversight for each Peer Counselor who part time or greater. The IBCLC will have 5 hours per week for administrative time.

Starting in FY 2018, Fair Haven Community Health Center (FHCHC) Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program will merge with the Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH) York Street

Campus (YSC) site to form the New Haven WIC Peer Counseling Program. Merging of these programs will allow for continued Breastfeeding Peer Counseling services at YNHH YSC and FHCHC but will also expand to provide Peer Counseling services at Yale New Haven Hospital's St. Raphael's Campus (SRC) and The Cornell Scott Hill Health Center (CSHHC) as Peer Counseling Sites. This change will allow a presence of Peer Counselors at each New Haven WIC office.

Contract language changes have been made to reflect the merge and new budgets have been approved. Frequent technical assistance has been necessary to work through the logistics for this expanding program (on-site visits and conference calls). All New Haven WIC sites and their host agencies have agreed to the merge and see the benefits of expanding peer counseling services to all 4 sites of the New Haven WIC Program. YNHH YSC, YNHH SRC, FHCHC and CSHHC peers will work under the mentorship of one International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

During the 4th quarter of FY 17, the YNHH YSC received laptops, signature pads, printers and VPN tokens to use CT-WIC. This was made possible by collaboration among the State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator, CT DPH IT consultants and YNHH YSC IT to set up a connection to the YNHH YSC WIC for CT-WIC connectivity. We expect that all 4 New Haven sites will begin using the CT-WIC Peer Counseling modules by the first quarter of FY 2018. In preparation for this implementation, the CT-WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling modules were reviewed again and staff have received technical assistance visits to support this transition.

YNHH YSC WIC staff have been trained in the Peer Counseling modules at the local agency staff meeting from the State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator. October 12, 2017 Peer Counseling Modules will be reviewed with the New Haven WIC together with the New Haven WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program on CT-WIC by the State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator.

We were notified that the YNHH YSC was awarded the Loving Support Gold Award for 2018. With this award, all WIC Peer Counseling Programs in the State have active Gold Level-Loving Support Awards!

The most recent quarterly report for the YNHH program is attached.

WIC BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELING: PROVIDING LOVING SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING SUCCESS

In 2011, the Connecticut WIC Program established a pilot breastfeeding peer counseling program in three (3) WIC local agencies with existing IBCLC's on staff. Planning meetings

occurred between October 2010 and January 2011 and the BHP protocol and documentation forms were modified to accommodate the more traditional WIC peer counseling model embedded in a WIC clinic. Connecticut's pilot program, *WIC Peer Counseling: Providing Loving Support for Breastfeeding Success* has been up and running since March 2011. An IBCLC consultant was hired to provide technical assistance to both the State and local agencies and to provide training to WIC peer counselors.

2017 Update

We will showcase 2017 updates individually for each clinic-based program due to the unique and substantial changes that occurred over this past year.

TVCCA_

FY 2017 has brought many changes to our TVCCA agency overall, in addition to the peer program. In fall 2017 the agency hired a new peer for approximately 15 hours/week. She is a Hispanic, bicultural, bilingual, WIC Mom who is currently nursing her 18 month old. Due to the rollout of CT-WIC, the State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator provided training for her, using the Loving Support Curriculum, all twelve modules completed between the first and early second quarter of FY 17. The Peer Counselor was awarded and recognized at June Statewide meeting for her accomplishment. The Peer Counselor was trained after the completion of the Loving Support Modules on CT-WIC and she was the first Peer Counselor in the State who went from Loving Support training directly to using CT-WIC for Peer Counseling documentation. Throughout the year, the State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator trained the Peer on CT-WIC, provided updated training to TVCCA's local breastfeeding coordinator (IBCLC) and provided additional training to local WIC agency staff for the integrated features of CT-WIC/Peer Counseling modules to provide WIC families participating in the peer program comprehensive care.

This Peer Counselor also was involved in the implementation of the first every Baby Café through TVCCA. She was trained within a month of hiring, along with the local Breastfeeding Coordinator, TVCCA management staff and the State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator. She joined the Baby Café team the end of the 2nd quarter and attends weekly meetings as the WIC Peer Counselor.

Baby café has been a positive addition to the TVCCA WIC program, providing weekly support for breastfeeding dyads. TVCCA's local Breastfeeding Coordinator and administrative staff is hoping to make WIC services available in FY 18. This will add another layer to the Baby Café allowing participants to benefit from receiving WIC services as needed while they attend.

FHCHC

This New Haven site continues with 1 FTE (37.5 hrs/week), Hispanic bilingual Peer Counselor. This Peer Counselor successfully completed the CLC training. We are so proud of her accomplishments. She is our most senior clinic-based peer and it has been amazing to

watch her grow in her confidence and skill. FHCHC continues work within CT-WIC identifying best practices and identifying bugs. Many lessons learned about CT-WIC Peer Counseling Modules have been identified and many bugs have been fixed through the work of this peer and the program staff. This program's efforts, has allowed the State agency to enhance the usability of the CT-WIC Peer Counseling modules. State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator has provided numerous technical assistance visits to assist in the identification and work around for identified bugs, in addition to education of staff on CT-WIC new reports and system updates. As noted previously, FHCHC will merge with the New Haven peer program in FY 2018.

Optimus

State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator visited Optimus in FY 2017 to learn about their program operations. They have a local Breastfeeding Coordinator/DBE, but their peer IBCLC works minimally in the office, 2 hours per week. The Peer Counselor at this site is Hispanic, bilingual and works as approximately 12 hours/week. Focus of the feedback from the visit, ideas to make the IBCLC time in the office most valuable. As a result of the technical assistance, several changes occurred: Infant certifications were scheduled during the IBCLC time, IBCLC had access to a Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program phone to make follow-up and yielded phone calls based on participants' needs rather than specific office hours. This allows Breastfeeding Dyads more immediate help and support.

The State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator also provided review of CT-WIC Peer Counseling modules with the Peer Counseling team, provided education, support and guidance and Optimus WIC and they transitioned their paper documentation system electronically to CT-WIC. Optimus implemented CT-WIC Peer Counseling Modules in the second quarter of FY 2017.

Challenges and Opportunities:

Due to some setbacks with the peer counseling reports in the new CT-WIC system, we continue to struggle with timely data collection. We are hoping to have by mid-calendar year 2018, access to work, quality assurance and outcome reports. Additionally, we plan to implement peer counseling (pilot-test) into routine WIC Program monitoring in FY 2018.

LATCH Study:

The YNHH and HHC BHP programs and the two-current WIC clinic-based Breastfeeding Peer Counseling programs (Fair Haven and TVCCA) participated in the expanded LATCH (**LATCH Lactation Advice thru Texting Can Help**) study that concluded in FY 2016. This study was funded through the USDA Center for Collaborative Research on WIC Nutrition Education Innovations at the USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine (CNRC WIC

Center). It built on the LATCH pilot project and will examine the effectiveness of using texting to provide enhanced support through peer counselors. We've included a listing of published research and pending articles under review outlining LATCH's results.

Published study currently available:

Martinez, J.L., Shebl, F., Harari, N., Pérez-Escamilla, R. (2017). An Assessment of the Social Cognitive Predictors of Exclusive Breastfeeding Behavior Using the Health Action Process Approach. *Social Science and Medicine*. Vol. 182: 106-116.

Accepted and awaiting publication:

Feasibility and Acceptability of a Text Message Intervention Used as an Adjunct Tool by WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors: the LATCH pilot to Maternal & Child Nutrition has been accepted and awaiting publication.

Under review:

Martinez, J.L., Harari, N., Segura-Pérez-S., Goeschel, L., Bozzi, V., Pérez-Escamilla, R. (2017). Impact of the Lactation Advice Through Texting Can Help (LATCH) Trial on Time-to-First-Contact and Exclusive Breastfeeding Among WIC Participants. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. *Under Review*.

Martinez, J.L., Harari, N., Pérez-Escamilla, R. (2017). Lactation Advice Through Texting Can Help (LATCH): An analysis of intensity of engagement via two-way text messaging. *Journal of Health Communication*. *Under Review*.

GENERAL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A description of the Connecticut WIC Program's model, which incorporates the *FNS Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program*, follows.

1. Appropriate Definition of Peer Counselor

The Connecticut WIC Program's definition of a breastfeeding peer counselor is as follows:

- Paraprofessional (i.e., no academic training in breastfeeding)
- Recruited and hired from target population (ideally, a current or past WIC participant)
- Available to WIC clients outside usual clinic hours and outside the WIC clinic environment
- Breastfeeding experience (ideally, a minimum of 6 months)

2. Designated breastfeeding peer counseling program managers/coordinators at State and/or local level

State Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator, Lori Goeschel, responsible for contract management and administrative oversight of the 5 peer programs in the state. As outlined above Lori has spent FY 2017 on peer training, technical assistance and CT-WIC implementation and troubleshooting. She has also worked extensively with New Haven WIC Program on impending implementation for city-wide peer services and program organization. A contract extension was processed for HHC through September 30, 2018. With the assistance of the State WIC Breastfeeding Co- Coordinators she will be responsible for ensuring that the USDA WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling funds are used to expand WIC breastfeeding support services through peer counseling.

The State Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator maintains contact with subcontractors Leticia Marulanda (HHC) and Kate Manuel (YNHH) with the regarding the status of the program and quarterly reports are required to document progress. Due to the delay in implementing CT-WIC and new contract language, reports will be updated to reflect CT-WIC and contract language changes in FY 2018.

3. Defined job parameters and job descriptions for peer counselors

- The breastfeeding peer counselors are community women, *reflective of the WIC participant population*, who have experience in successfully breastfeeding a child for a minimum of six months. They are committed to encouraging women to initiate and continue breastfeeding, and supporting those who decide to do so, so that they may have the best chance of success and a positive experience. They are responsible for positive role modeling, providing information, encouragement, and knowledgeable support and in person assistance to pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers.
- Peer counselors provide services through a combination of telephone contacts and home and hospital visits, according to program protocols (see item 6, below).
- Peer counselors also participate in promotional and advocacy activities.
- Peer counselors receive ongoing training and continuing education as described in item 10.

4. Adequate compensation and reimbursement of peer counselors

The BHP peer counselors currently receive approximately \$17.00 per hour. Since its inception in 1993, the BHP Program has tried a number of different options for hiring and compensation. The hiring of full time peers who receive a benefit package and adequate compensation has resulted in the best retention rates and, ultimately, the operation of an efficient and effective program. The WIC-clinic based peers receive \$10.00-\$12.00 per hour and are required to work a minimum of 10 hours per week.

5. Training of appropriate WIC State/local peer counseling management and clinic staff

- WIC clinic-based peers attended the CT-LLL annual Healthcare Provider Seminar in April 2017
- The State agency met as needed with HHC and Yale sub-contractors in 2017. More intense meetings took place in order to work out details of New Haven expansion of peer hours in FY 2017.
- Peer counselors provided input on implementation of CT-WIC peer module including identification of bugs and development of solutions (FHCHC).
- Peer Retreat completed January 2017 (BHP and WIC clinic-based)
- Peer Counseling Module (CT-WIC) training completed September 2016.
- Peer counselors were invited to attend FY 2017 WIC Statewide Meetings to facilitate teambuilding.

6. Establishment of standardized breastfeeding peer counseling program policies and procedures at the State and local level as part of Agency nutrition education plan.

- **Compensation and reimbursement of peer counselors:** Peer counselors will be compensated at a rate that will promote retention.
- **Training:** Peer counselors will be trained using the "*Loving Support* through Peer Counseling" curriculum as well as the BHP training curriculum.
- **Documentation of client contacts:** All participant contacts, including unsuccessful attempts, will be documented in CT-WIC. Transition to only CT-WIC module for HHC will be rolled out between October 2017 and January 2018.
- **Referral protocols:** See specific protocols for referral procedures.
- **Confidentiality:** The Participant Consent form will be read by or to the participant before the initiation of services. Both hospital and WIC-clinic based programs follow WIC confidentiality regulations.

7. Adequate supervision and monitoring of peer counselors On-site Breastfeeding Coordinators or Lactation Consultants

- initial and continued training of peer counselors;
- assignment of referrals;
- regular guidance of patient/ participant care; provision of direct care for complex cases based on program protocols;
- consult as necessary to Program Directors and reporting regularly to Program Directors;
- providing first-line problem solving for peer counselors, and triaging when necessary to program directors and/or medical consultants;

- provision of public education sessions to promote and inform community members about breastfeeding and;
- shared review of program participant charts for accuracy and thoroughness.

8. Establishment of community partnerships to enhance the effectiveness of a WIC peer counseling program.

The BHP program model is designed to benefit the community served through a partnership between Hartford Hospital, Hispanic Health Council and the Hartford WIC Program combining the expertise and resources of each institution to provide an integrated breastfeeding peer counselor program. The BHP replication in New Haven also integrates this partnership approach. The YNHH BHP program has its offices co-located with the WIC Program site at Yale New Haven Hospital. In the WIC clinic-based programs, peer counselors have relationships with area birthing facilities and have also worked closely with hospitals involved in the Connecticut Ten Step Collaborative, the continuation of the successful, Connecticut Breastfeeding Initiative (CBI), a CPPW project funded by CDC to assist 10 maternity facilities in Connecticut in Baby-Friendly designation. Bacchus hospital in the New London area (TVCCA) is in the Development Phase of the 4-D Pathway (BFHI). Currently there are 10 BF Designated Hospitals in the State. Hartford Hospital is up for re-designation in 2017. HHC Peers are involved in the site visit.

9. Provision of the following to peer counselors:

Timely access to breastfeeding coordinators and other lactation experts for assistance with problems outside of peer counselor scope of practice

In Hartford and New Haven, both BHP Program Lactation Consultants, and the Hartford Hospital Program Director are IBCLC's. Both program's have access to medical consultants who are available whenever assistance is needed.

Peers are mentored by staff IBCLC's employed by WIC local agencies as Nutritionists in the two (soon to be three again) WIC clinic-based sites. WIC IBCLC's time are partially funded by the peer counseling grant. WIC IBCLC's have access to medical support as needed through their host agencies.

The following BHP Peer Counselor Performance Plan addresses:

- **Regular, systematic contact with supervisor.**
- **Participation in clinic staff meetings and breastfeeding in-services as part of the WIC team**
- **Opportunities to meet regularly with other peer counselors.**

| BHP Peer Counselor Performance Plan Goals: |
|---|
| Successfully complete peer counselor training process; pass exam with minimum of 80%; Demonstrate competencies based on supervisor observation |
| Follow-up on all prenatal referrals within 1 week of assignment; post partum within one day |
| Home visits provided according to the following protocols: <u>Prenatal:</u> Provide all prenatal clients with minimum of one prenatal visits; <u>Hospital:</u> Provide all post partum clients with minimum of one in-hospital visit, additional visits based on need of participant. <u>Post partum:</u> (minimum of) once within 24 hours of hospital discharge; once within 48 hours of hospital discharge; once within two weeks of hospital discharge; once within six weeks of hospital discharge; provide telephone calls between visits, and additional visits and telephone calls according to need |
| Content of all visits according to training and protocols provided - based on program forms |
| Thorough and accurate documentation of all contacts and attempted contacts (see attachments) |
| Participation in biweekly meetings with program lactation consultant and monthly meetings with program co-director; maintain regular communication with program lactation consultant according to protocol and as needed |
| Participation in monthly BHP staff meetings for training and coordination activities |
| Communication regarding clients with hospital clinicians as needed |

| WIC clinic Peer Counselor Performance Plan Goals: |
|--|
| Successfully complete peer counselor training process; Demonstrate competencies based on supervisor observation |
| Follow-up on all prenatal referrals within 1 week of assignment; post partum within one day |
| Content of all visits according to training and protocols is provided based on program forms |
| Thorough and accurate documentation of all contacts and attempted contacts |
| Participation in required (weekly) meetings with WIC IBCLC and supervisor as needed; maintain regular communication with IBCLC and other WIC staff according to protocol and as needed |
| Participation in monthly Peer Counseling training conference calls; prepare and facilitate one call for other peers, IBCLC's and state staff each year |
| Engage in community outreach per instructed by WIC IBCLC mentor or clinic supervisor to foster continuity of care for peer counseling participants. |

The State agency modified the BHP performance plan goals for the WIC clinic-based peer counseling program 2013. They were finalized and reviewed with the clinic-based programs in 2014. They will be implemented and evaluated in 2018, after CT-WIC implementation. We will measure program goals and objectives when we can extrapolate data from CT-WIC in Peer Counseling modules.

10. Provision of training and continuing education of peer counselors.

- **Peer counselors receive standardized training using “*Loving Support through Peer Counseling*” training curriculum.**

- **Peer counselors receive ongoing training at regularly scheduled meetings.**

The BHP peer counselors participate in monthly BHP staff meetings for training and coordination activities. They are expected to participate in any training activities sponsored by the Hartford WIC Program. In New Haven, the Peer Counselor Coordinator/IBCLC continues to update her peers on the Loving Support platform modules. New in FY 2017, all WIC funded peers (hospital and WIC clinic based) are expected to attend all appropriate State meetings, retreats targeted to Peer Counseling staff and call into monthly conference calls.

- 2017 Trainings include:
 - CT-WIC Peer Counseling Module Training- September 2016
 - Peer Retreat- January 2017
 - WIC clinic-based and hospital based peers attended CT-LLL Healthcare Provider Seminar- April 2017
 - Monthly Conference calls (See below for topics)
 - Opportunities to attend WIC Statewide Meetings

- 2018 Trainings (planned)
 - Peer Retreat- TBD 2018
 - Overview of New Haven WIC Program Peer Counseling Program- October 12, 2018
 - Monthly Conference calls to discuss CT-WIC Peer Module implementation/progress
 - CT-LLL Healthcare Provider Seminar- April 2018
 - Opportunities to attend WIC Statewide Meeting (once all Peer Counseling Programs are in CT-WIC, they will be invited to Breastfeeding Coordinator meetings).

Training Overview

The State agency hosted CT-WIC Peer Counseling Module training for all peer counselors and IBCLC mentors in September 2016. We also provided opportunities for peers to participate in on-line training (LER) for continuing education.

FY 2017 Breastfeeding Conference calls topics were selected based on interest. All calls open with announcements, follow up question and comments from the last call, followed by the "topic of the month" and at the close of the meeting we end with CT-WIC updates if they apply. The end of the call there is time for program management only, for concerns and questions. Agenda and minutes about the call are emailed to Peer Counseling teams and attendance is tracked.

- It's Worth It,
- Recap and discussion of LLLI conference,
- Baby Café, Facebook page,
- Report out from WBW,
- Diabetes and Breastfeeding.

Our peer retreat held in January 2017, and covered Secrets of Baby Behavior, CT-WIC updates, guided imagery mediation and ended with interactive, uplifting activity for Peer Counseling Staff which included creating vision boards to include personal and or professional goals. We ended the retreat with instructions on how to create Tree of Light pictures with breastfeeding dyads. Peer created tree of life photos of them and their babies/children or of other people.

Mellessa Milling- McPherson (WIC Program operations Monitor) conducted annual Civil Right training in the 2nd quarter of FY 2017. New Staff have received ongoing training as they come onboard by the State WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Coordinator.