

Bringing a Local Focus to Breastfeeding

In September 2011, the Oregon WIC program was awarded a \$2.5 million bonus award from USDA- Food and Nutrition Service for having one of the highest percentages of exclusively breastfed infants. To further exclusive breastfeeding in the state and meet the September 30, 2012 deadline, the State WIC office decided to use these one-time monies to further build breastfeeding capacity at the local level and strengthen the image and presence of WIC across the state.

To optimize the number of projects undertaken in the short timeline, a temporary project coordinator was hired. An initial effort provided local agencies certificates of recognition and funds from \$5,000-\$10,000 based on agency size. Certificates were awarded in person at all 34 local agencies, creating opportunities for local media events. Local agencies were invited to competitively apply for additional funds to support innovative local projects that align with the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding. As a result, \$540,000 was awarded to 23 projects statewide for coalition development, worksite policy, childcare policy and baby friendly initiatives. At the state level, plans are underway to initiate a statewide breastfeeding strategic plan. For the 2012 season, the bonus was also used to expand the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to reach almost every eligible WIC participant (vs. 25% in previous years) to provide additional fresh fruits and veggies from local farmers markets and farm stands for older infants, children and mothers. As monies allow, local agency staff will be supported to attend the 2012 NWA Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Conference.

With less than one-year to spend these funds, the Oregon WIC program successfully created a mix of projects to recognize local agency efforts, strengthen local infrastructure for supporting breastfeeding, and increasing the access to locally produced fruits and vegetables.

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