

## **AHEAD 2.0: Strengthening and Diversifying the WIC Workforce (IBCLC) Subgrant Funding**

### **Overview**

The strength of WIC depends on the diversity of its workforce. The workforce includes Registered Dietitians (RDs), International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs), Breastfeeding Peer Counselors, Competent Professional Authorities (CPAs), and Competent Paraprofessionals Authorities (CPPAs).

The National WIC Association aims to strengthen and diversify the WIC program's network of RDs and IBCLCs by training individuals to provide vital nutrition and breastfeeding education and support and ensuring WIC professionals reflect their communities.

### **Eligibility**

This opportunity aims for NWA to provide subgrant funds to State or Local WIC Agencies seeking to address racial inequities in lactation care and support within their Agency. The State and Local WIC Agencies will utilize the subgrants to fund scholarships for their Black and Indigenous staff in completing the requirements needed to apply for and sit the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) exam.

**This funding round is dedicated to supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) applicants.** Priority will be given to those assisting WIC participants with limited access to IBCLC services and breastfeeding initiation rates below the national average, per the CDC Breastfeeding Report Card- [CDC Breastfeeding Report Card](#). We are committed to promoting diversity and addressing maternal and infant health disparities.

The number of WIC staff members supported will be determined by the availability of funds. **(Note: State and Local Agencies who received prior subgrant funding are not eligible to apply. Contractual staff is not eligible to apply for subgrant funding).**

The AHEAD 2.0: Strengthening and Diversifying the WIC Workforce for IBCLCs subgrant application should be emailed to [CIPWIC@nwica.org](mailto:CIPWIC@nwica.org). For more information, contact Stacy Davis at [sdavis@nwica.org](mailto:sdavis@nwica.org).

## **Proposal Requirements**

Proposals must be submitted in **PDF format by Friday, December 1, 2023, by 5:00 PM ET and should be 12 pages maximum.** Submissions must be on time to **be accepted.** Submit your proposal and questions to the Center for Innovative Practices of WIC at [CIPWIC@nwica.org](mailto:CIPWIC@nwica.org). Your proposal should include the following:

### ***Agency Profile***

Please provide the following information:

1. Name of the individual completing the proposal along with title and contact information (e.g., work address, phone number, and email address),
2. Agency name and location (city and state)
3. Description of community
4. Length of time to process, approve, and execute contracts

### ***Statement of Interest and Need***

The Statement of Interest and Need should describe in detail the following:

1. Describe how diversifying IBCLCs at your State or Local WIC Agency would positively impact the community served. Draw on any available demographic data to demonstrate how diversifying the breastfeeding workforce is essential in your community.
2. The staff members that the State or Local Agency intends to support. Please include demographic information and a bio for each staff member (250 words or less). **(Note: Contractual staff are not eligible to apply for subgrant funding).**
3. What amount of funding are you requesting, and how do you anticipate this funding will be used? Examples of support include costs of college course fees, lactation-specific continuing education credits, conferences, textbooks, professional membership(s) to any international, national, state, or local lactation consultant professional association, or IBLCE examination fees only. (Note: This information should also be included in the budget.)

### ***Proposal***

Provide a description of the organization and any other relevant information that speaks to the demographics of WIC staff and participants. Please describe, in detail, how each subgrant recipient will utilize the funds to obtain their IBCLC credential.

Please be sure to include the following information:

- Name of each subgrant recipient, demographic description, length of employment with State or Local WIC Agency, and current title
- A detailed work plan for obtaining the credential for each eligible subgrant recipient, including programs the recipient plans on enrolling in and any other

support needed, estimated date of completion of IBLCE requirements, and anticipated date of IBLCE examination.

**Proposals are due on Friday, December 1, 2023, by 5:00 PM ET.** An electronic PDF copy of the proposal shall be emailed to the Center for Innovative Practices of WIC, [CIPWIC@nwica.org](mailto:CIPWIC@nwica.org). All questions must be submitted via email to the Center for Innovative Practices of WIC- [CIPWIC@nwica.org](mailto:CIPWIC@nwica.org). **The deadline for question submissions is Thursday, November 16, 2023.**

#### *Timeline*

The subgrant period will commence in January 2024 and conclude on November 30, 2024. **Final reports are due on or before Thursday, November 30, 2024.**

#### ***Budget***

Provide a comprehensive budget and narrative using the budget template, including the requested funding level and detailed expenses. Allowable expenses include college course fees, lactation-specific continuing education credits, conferences, textbooks, membership(s) to an international, national, state, or local professional association, or IBLCE examination fees only.

State and Local Agencies can request funding up to \$10,000.00 per eligible WIC staff member. (Note: The amount of funding and number of WIC staff members supported will be determined by the availability of funds.)

#### ***Letter of Support***

Please include a completed letter of support from your State WIC Director. The letter of support should be on official letterhead and include the following statement,

*“[Agency A] is in good management standing with the B State WIC Agency, and I support [Agency A’s] application for NWA’s AHEAD 2.0: Strengthening and Diversifying the WIC Workforce for IBCLCs subgrant project.”*

**Note: The letter of support must accompany the proposal upon submission. Proposals must submit a letter of support to be deemed complete and accepted.**

#### *Selection Criteria & Process*

Successful proposals will demonstrate a need for support and describe how diversifying IBCLCs at your State or Local WIC Agency would positively impact the community served, increase participant enrollment and retention, and the agency's breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity rates.

NWA is seeking Agencies with limited lactation resources and is committed to addressing racial inequities in lactation care and support within their Agency. Priority will be given to applicants with breastfeeding initiation rates below the national rate (see [CDC Breastfeeding Report Card](#)).

The request for proposals was released on Monday, October 23, 2023. Those interested in applying can attend office hours on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, from 10:00 AM ET to noon ET, with the Director of the Center for Innovative Practices in WIC and project lead, Stacy Davis. Questions will be accepted between Monday, October 23, 2023, and Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 5:00 PM ET.

**Applications are due by 5:00 PM ET on Friday, December 1, 2023.** NWA will review all submitted proposals that are complete and fulfill the requirements. Submissions must meet the criteria or are submitted after the deadline to be accepted.

### **Key Points to Remember**

- An AHEAD 2.0: Strengthening and Diversifying the WIC Workforce (IBCLC) application or award cannot be deferred to a future exam. Staff members must sit for the exam in 2023 or 2024.
- An unfunded applicant may choose to proceed with the exam application at his/her/hers own expense or wait and apply again later if an opportunity exists in the future.
- Recipients of the AHEAD 2.0: Strengthening and Diversifying the WIC Workforce subgrants may be asked to complete a survey about his/her/their experience in becoming a lactation consultant for up to two (2) years after receiving exam results. Application for a subgrant award constitutes agreement to complete such a survey.
- Those awarded subgrants will be able to use the funds toward the costs of college course fees and Pathway 2 programs, lactation-specific continuing education credits, conferences, textbooks, professional memberships to any international, national, state, or local lactation consultant professional association, clinical mentorship fees, and IBCLC examination fees. (Note: Subgrant funds cannot be utilized for salary, stipends, childcare, etc.)
- State and Local WIC Agencies with limited lactation resources will be given preference.
- State and Local WIC Agencies who apply will be notified via email the week of December 18, 2023.

### **Timeline & Important Dates**

RFP Available: Monday, October 23, 2023

Question Period: Monday, October 23 to Thursday, November 16, 2023

Proposals Due: Friday, December 1, 2023, 5:00 PM ET

Subgrant Award Announcements: Week of Monday, December 18, 2023

**Important Information:**

[IBLCE Candidate Information Guide](#)

[IBLCE Fee Guide 2023](#)

[IBLCE Key Dates](#)

**Resources:**

[North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University Pathway 2 Lactation Program](#)

(North Carolina residents only)

[United States Lactation Consultant Association](#)

[International Lactation Consultant Association](#)

[BreastfeedLA's Lactation Education program](#)