

WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence

Application Assistance for Local WIC Agencies



The purpose of this presentation is to inform local agencies how to complete the WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence applications.

Who can apply?

**The 2025 application period opens on
October 7 and closes on December 13, 2024**

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 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)

There are 3 awards but only 2 applications: one application for the Gold Award and one combined application for Premiere Award and Elite Awards.

Online Application

Application is available on
WIC Works Resource System

<https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/wic-breastfeeding-award-excellence>



The screenshot displays the WIC Works Resource System website. At the top left is the USDA logo and the text "WIC Works Resource System U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE". A navigation bar includes links for "ABOUT", "RESOURCES", "TRAINING", "CONTACT", and "PUBLICATION ORDERING", along with a search bar. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb "Home / WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence" is visible. The main heading is "WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence". A blue "Print" button is located below the heading. The text states: "The 2025 application period opens on **October 7, 2024**, and closes on **December 13, 2024**." Under "Application eligibility:", there is a bulleted list: "• Must be a local WIC agency*", "• Must have operated a peer counseling program for at least 1 year", and "• Peer counseling program must meet all required core components of the FNS [WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling](#) for a successful peer counseling program." A footnote at the bottom reads: "*Local WIC agencies designated by State WIC agencies on [WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Report](#) and Form FNS-648." A small number "4" is in the bottom right corner of the screenshot.

For the 2025 application period, the same online application platform is being used on WIC Works Resource System that was used for 2023 and 2024.

Visit <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/wic-breastfeeding-award-excellence>

<https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/>

Immunization Webinar for WIC Staff
You are cordially invited to attend the annual immunization webinar for WIC staff on Thursday, September 29 at 1 PM ET, sponsored and hosted by Vaccinate Your Family (VYF), NWA, CDC, and USDA.
[Learn more](#)

Welcome to the WIC Works Resource System
The WIC Works Resource System is an education and training center for the staff of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

I'm looking to

- APPLY FOR A WIC BREASTFEEDING AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
- Apply for a WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence

FEATURED RESOURCE
50th Anniversary of WIC
[Learn More](#) [Browse All Resources](#)

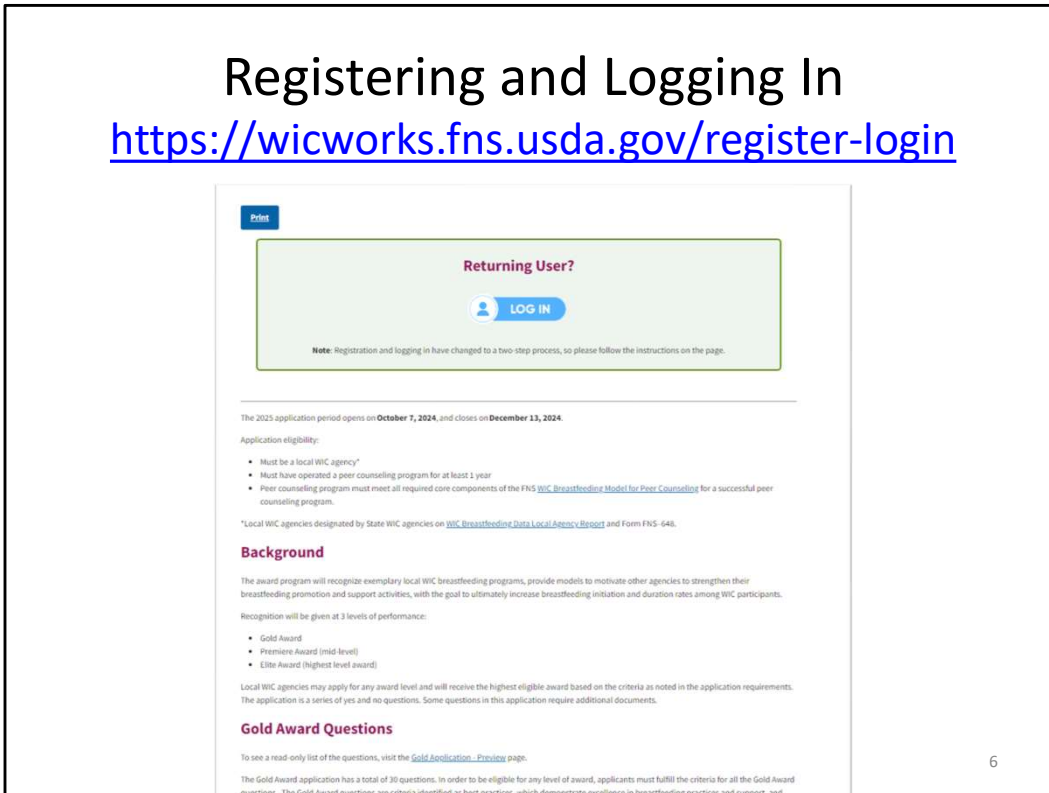
Take WIC training
Find materials to share with participants
Search the image gallery
See what's new

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The application can also be accessed by choosing the drop-down box on the homepage for WIC Works Resource System and selecting: “Apply for a Breastfeeding Award of Excellence.”

Registering and Logging In

<https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/register-login>



At the top of the application page, you'll find a button to start the login process. New users may want to review this important information page before proceeding and then select the Log In button. Returning users can select the Log In button to proceed.

Please use this page to guide your signing in: <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/register-login>

New this year, users will complete a 2-step login, using a login.gov account. Please see the Register and Login page linked for more information.

Return to the Application

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[Learn more](#)

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FEATURED RESOURCE
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[Learn More](#) [Browse All Resources](#)

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Once you've logged in successfully, you'll need to get back to the application page. To easily get back to the award application, return to the home screen and select in the "I'm looking to..." dropdown, "Apply for a WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence."

Gold Award Application Instructions

Documentation

There are two types of document requests, a narrative and 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 between 200 and 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.

Gold Application

Premiere and Elite Application

First, if you have not already, read through the information provided. You may also print and preview the application questions using the links in the “Gold Award Questions” and “Premiere and Elite Award Questions” sections.

To begin an application, scroll down from the main WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence page and select the blue “Gold Application” button to begin the Gold application.

The awards build on one another.

- If you have a valid Gold award (2022, 2023, 2024) and are applying for a Premiere or Elite award you may skip the “Gold Application” and select “Premiere and Elite Application.”
- If you do not have a valid Gold award and want to apply for a Premiere or Elite award you must start with the Gold application, and then complete the Premiere or Elite application.

Pre-screening Questions

• Applicants must have a current Gold Award or apply and be awarded a Gold Award for this application year AND

• ALL the Premiere and Elite application questions must be answered AND

• Performance data demonstrates 40% or higher improvement in the area of peer counseling.

Documentation

There are two types of document requests, a narrative and supportive documentation.

- Narrative refers to a document with explanatory text that should describe how your agency meets the criteria for the award. Narratives are between 200 and 500 words.
- Supportive documentation refers to documents such as MOU's, etc.; however, State and Federal documents are locally developed policies, procedures, and manuals that demonstrate your agency meets the criteria of a specific question as noted in the instructions.

If your local agency received a Gold award in the past 4 years you are eligible to [skip to the Premiere and Elite Application](#).

Has your local agency peer counseling program been in place for at least one year?

Does your local agency peer counseling program meet all components of the FNS WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling?

[Continue](#) OMB 0584-0591

[Gold Application](#) [Premiere and Elite Application](#)

Your first step in applying will be to select the blue “Gold Application” button, and then answer two screening questions to ensure you are eligible to apply for an award.

These questions are based on the criteria mentioned previously about who can apply for this award. To apply for any award, you must have operated a peer counseling program for at least 1 year and the peer counseling program meets all core components of the WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling.

For question 2, please refer to the WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling Required Program Components. If your answer is ‘yes’ to both prescreening questions, you are eligible to apply for the Gold Award.

If you do not meet the prescreening requirements, do not continue with the application. Instead, strengthen those identified areas to improve upon for the next application period! The application will open again next fiscal year to provide you with an opportunity to apply at that time.

Cover Sheet

Gold Application

Cover Sheet

Local Agency Name *

50 word(s) remaining

Address *

Address 2

City/Town * State/Province * ZIP/Postal Code *

 - Select -

Country *

 United States

Region

Email *

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You will then be directed to the Cover Sheet. Fill out all required fields on the cover sheet.

Then scroll down to view and begin the application questions.

Gold Application Questions

Peer Counseling

QUESTION 1

Does your local agency conduct an annual needs assessment that identifies each of the following:

- (a) the 2 top priorities for your target audience;
- (b) where gaps exist in breastfeeding services and resources within your local agency and the community that can be addressed through peer counseling; and
- (c) where improvements in your program are needed?

Fill in narrative.

Yes

No [Instructions](#)

Question 1 Narrative *

There is a 200 word minimum and a 500 word maximum on this field. 500 words remaining

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Read each question carefully and select Yes or No.

Since all questions must be a Yes to receive a Gold award, if No is selected you will receive a pop-up notification, "YES must be selected to be eligible for an award." **If your answer is a No, do not continue with the application. Instead, strengthen those identified areas to improve upon for the next application period!** The application will open again next year to provide you with an opportunity to apply at that time.

Some questions, like Question 1 shown above, require a written narrative of 200-500 words. Other questions require supportive documentation attachments described on the next slide.

For more instructions regarding a question select the blue "Instructions" link.

Supportive Documentation

QUESTION 2

Do you have a protocol that describes how peer counselors address a mother 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.

Yes
 No
[▶ Instructions](#)

Question 2 Document * Question 2 Document Title * Question 2 Document Page Number *

Uploaded files will not be saved when saving a draft. Attach supportive documentation only when you are ready to submit your application.

50 word(s) remaining 50 word(s) remaining

No file chosen
One file only.
37 MB limit.
Allowed types: txt, pdf, doc, docx, xls,xlsx, ods, jpg, jpeg, png, bmp.

Important tip! Add all supportive documentation once the application is complete and it is ready to submit.

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Some questions, like question 2 shown above, require a supportive documentation attachment.

Supportive Documentation are preexisting policies, procedures, agreements, etc.

Pay special attention to the examples of acceptable supportive documentation and narratives within the Instructions. This is the criteria which the response will be evaluated, and points given or not given.

Acceptable file types of documentation included are listed.

*****You should attach all supportive documentation only when you are ready to submit your application.**

Once you've attached the document, add the title in the Document Title box and then provide the corresponding page number that a reviewer can refer to to evaluate your answer.

Save a Draft

Disclosure

Please read the following statement and type your local agency name for signature below if you agree:

I have reviewed this application and I attest to the accuracy of the information provided. I agree to maintain the standards and procedures indicated in this application for the duration of our award period. Furthermore, I agree to cooperate with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), upon request, to publicize our efforts. The State agency and FNS reserve the right to verify all information on the application and reject applications that do not meet defined criteria or otherwise fail to provide accurate information.

Local Agency Name *

50 word(s) remaining

Date

10/12/2022

OMB 0584-0591 EXP Date: 11/30/2023

CAPTCHA

This question is for testing whether or not you are a human visitor and to prevent automated spam submissions.

Math question *

10 + 5 =

Solve this simple math problem and enter the result. E.g. for 1+3, enter 4.

[Return to top](#)

About Resources Training Contact

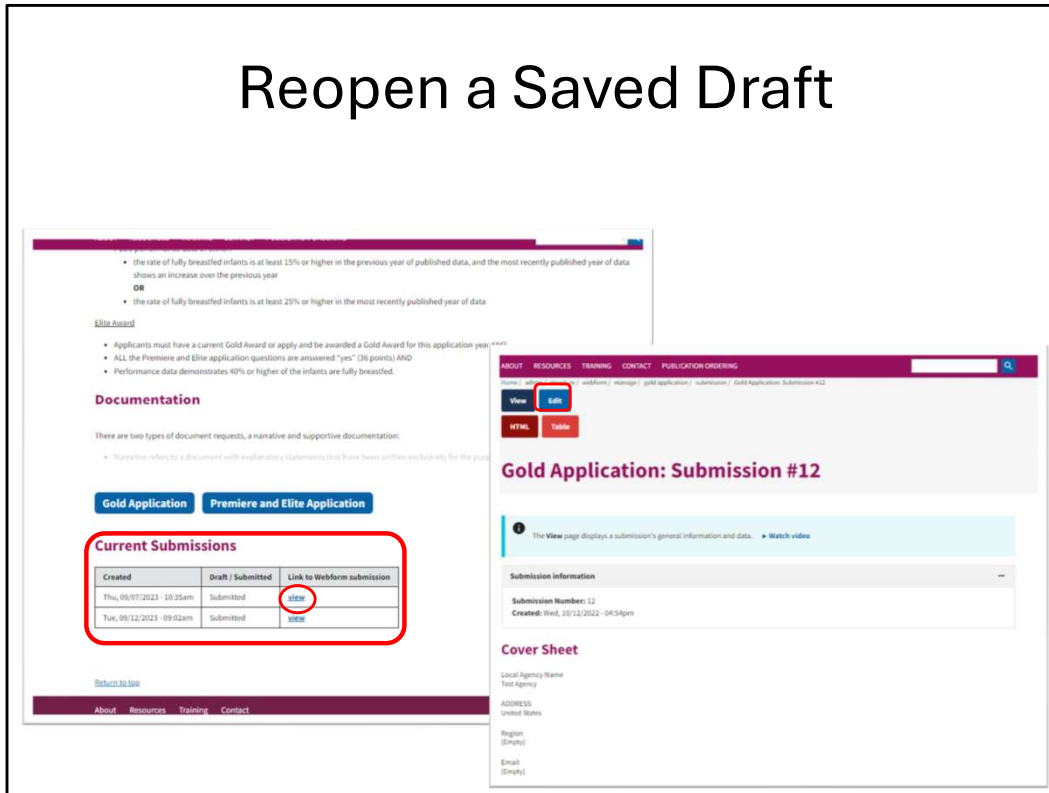
Save Draft **Submit**

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If you need to complete the application at a later time, select “Save Draft” located at the bottom of the page. See the next slide for information about reopening to a started draft later.

It is recommended to select the “Save Draft” button regularly. If you are going finish your application at a later time be sure to also log-out (link is at the top of the screen).

Reopen a Saved Draft



If you “Save Draft” and want to return to your started application, simply return to the main application page, <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/wic-breastfeeding-award-excellence> and login using your login information.

The application/s you have started with show up at the bottom of the page. Select “view” to bring you to the application that was started. Then to edit the application, select the “Edit” button that is in the top left-hand corner of the page, circled in red above.

Submit the Application

Disclosure

Please read the following statement and type your local agency name for signature below if you agree:

I have reviewed this application and I attest to the accuracy of the information provided. I agree to maintain the standards and procedures indicated in this application for the duration of our award period. Furthermore, I agree to cooperate with the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), upon request, to publicize our efforts. The State agency and FNS reserve the right to verify all information on the application and reject applications that do not meet defined criteria or otherwise fail to provide accurate information.

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Math question *

10 + 5 =

Solve this simple math problem and enter the result. E.g. for 1+3, enter 4.

[Return to top](#)

About Resources Training Contact

Save Draft Submit

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Continue until all 30 questions are answered with narratives and supportive documentation as required.

Once all required fields are entered and you filled out the Disclosure, you are ready to submit, select “Submit.” If you have not filled out a part of the application, you will be notified of this before you will be able to Submit.

As recommended on slide 12, **it is recommended to attach all supportive documentation only when you are ready to submit your application.**

Once you have submitted the application you will receive a confirmation email sent to the email address you have input.

Gold Award Evaluation & Scoring

30 points

All questions are required

Performance data is not considered

Your State Agency and FNS will evaluate your application and supportive documentation based on the criteria as described in the Application Instructions.

To be eligible for the Gold award you must have 30 points.

There are 30 questions each worth 1 point, therefore you must answer all the questions “yes” to be eligible for a Gold award.

Performance data is not considered for the Gold award.

Previous Gold Awardees

- Awards are valid for 4 years
- Past Gold Awardees applying for a higher level award will NOT submit a Gold Application
- Begin with the Premiere/Elite Application



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These instructions are only for Past Gold Awardees interested in applying for a higher award.

Premiere & Elite Application Instructions

Elite Award

- Applicants must have a current Gold Award or apply and be awarded a Gold Award for this application year AND
- ALL the Premiere and Elite application questions are answered "yes" (36 points) AND
- Performance data demonstrates 40% or higher of the infants are fully breastfed.

Documentation

There are two types of document requests, a narrative and supportive documentation:

- Narrative refers to a document with explanatory statements that have been written exclusively for the purpose of this application. The narrative

Gold Application

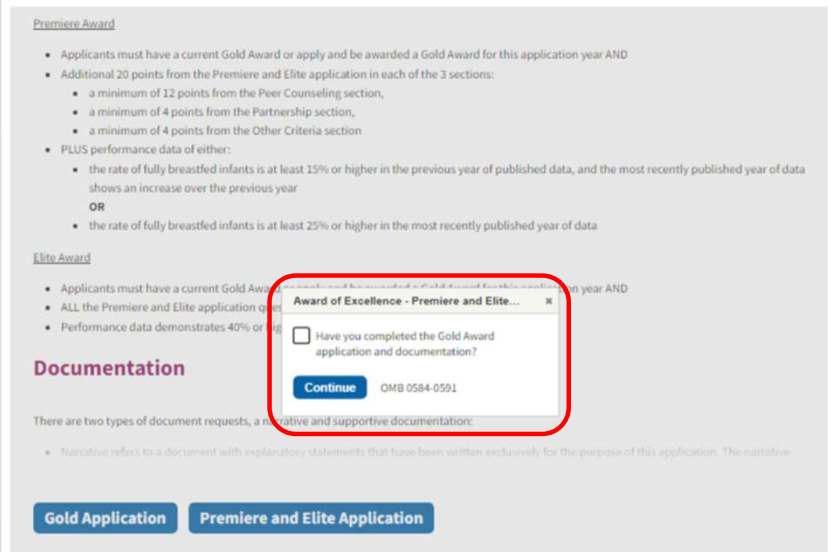
Premiere and Elite Application

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Local agencies who have a valid Gold Award (2022, 2023, 2024) applying for a higher award may begin by selecting the "Premiere and Elite Application Link" on the main application page.

For those local agencies who do not have a valid Gold award, please start with completing a Gold Application, and then fill out a separate Premiere and Elite Application.

Prescreening for Premiere & Elite Awards



The screenshot displays a web interface for award applications. It features two main sections: **Premiere Award** and **Elite Award**, each with a list of eligibility criteria. Below these is a **Documentation** section. A red box highlights a pop-up window titled "Award of Excellence - Premiere and Elite..." which contains a checkbox question: "Have you completed the Gold Award application and documentation?". A blue "Continue" button is visible at the bottom of the pop-up. At the bottom of the main page, there are two buttons: "Gold Application" and "Premiere and Elite Application".

Premiere Award

- Applicants must have a current Gold Award or apply and be awarded a Gold Award for this application year AND
- Additional 20 points from the Premiere and Elite application in each of the 3 sections:
 - 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
- PLUS performance data of either:
 - the rate of fully breastfed infants is at least 15% or higher 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 fully breastfed infants is at least 25% or higher in the most recently published year of data

Elite Award

- Applicants must have a current Gold Award or apply and be awarded a Gold Award for this application year AND
- ALL the Premiere and Elite application questions are answered
- Performance data demonstrates 40% or higher

Documentation

There are two types of document requests, a narrative and supportive documentation:

- Narrative refers to a document with explanatory statements that have been written exclusively for the purpose of this application. The narrative

Gold Application **Premiere and Elite Application**

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After selecting “Premiere and Elite Application” a prescreening question will pop-up to ensure you are eligible to begin applying.

The prescreening question must be answered before proceeding to the application questions.

The awards build on each other; you must be eligible for a Gold Award in order to be able to apply for a Premiere award or Elite award.

Evaluation and Scoring for the Combined Premiere & Elite Application

- 16 questions
 - each worth 2 or 3 points
- 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

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-breastfeeding-data-local-agency-report>

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As you look at the Premiere and Elite application and instructions, you will see that there are a total of 16 questions in 3 areas: Peer Counseling, Partnership, and Other Criteria.

Again, the application and application instructions are meant to be used together. You will need to refer to the instructions throughout the time that you are filling out the application.

The points will be used to calculate your score for eligibility for an award.

Performance data is considered for the Premiere and Elite awards.

You will not have to upload your performance data; however you will want to confirm if you are eligible for the 2 higher awards.

- Data is available at this website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-breastfeeding-data-local-agency-report>
- The FY 2022 and FY 2021 are the two years that should be used when checking the data. **The FY 2022 is expected to be available soon.**

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
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-breastfeeding-data-local-agency-report>

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The performance data considered for the awards is the program participant data for fully breastfed infant food package participation, expressed as a percentage of total infant participants in each local agency.

See the WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Reports or FAQ for more information.

The performance data used will be from the most recently posted WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Reports posted on the FNS public website at the URL listed here on the slide

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-breastfeeding-data-local-agency-report>

You will not have to upload your performance data; however you will want to confirm if you are eligible for the 2 higher awards.

- Data is available at this website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-breastfeeding-data-local-agency-report>
- The FY 2022 and FY 2021 are the two years that should be used when checking the data. The FY 2022 is expected to be available soon.

WIC Breastfeeding Data Performance Data requirements are on slide 22 and 23.

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 (FY 2022), and the most recently published year of data (FY 2022) shows an increase over the previous year (FY 2021)
- OR**
- the rate of exclusively breastfed infants is at least 25% or higher in the most recently published year of data (FY 2022)

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To be eligible for a Premiere Award you will need 20 points in addition to the Gold Award (30) points.

There are a minimum number of points need from each of the sections. Although you do not need to answer all 16 questions to meet the minimum point requirements for the Premiere award, it is recommended that you respond to as many questions as possible.

You will need

- 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

AND

The performance data indicating that **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

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Now we will move on to the scoring of the highest level award, the Elite award.

As stated previously the awards build on each other. The highest award, the Elite award, builds on both the Gold and the Premiere awards.

The Elite award requires that you have met the criteria for the Gold award, And that you have answered ALL the questions, and met the criteria for all the questions, on the Premiere and Elite application, and the performance data criteria is met.

The **performance data required for the Elite award is the percent of exclusively breastfed infants at 40% or higher.**

Technical Assistance

- Contact your State Agency for assistance with Application questions, supportive documentation, narratives and/or instructions
- Email WICHQ-SFPD@fns.usda.gov for assistance with further clarification and technical assistance
- Information on past awardees can be found at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-award-excellence-program>
- Visit [Contact Us](#) for assistance with logging in.

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If you have questions regarding the application process, the Frequently Asked Questions are available on FNS website at the URL listed here.

Frequently Asked Questions on the FNS website

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-award-excellence-program>

If you have questions or need assistance with downloading and/or uploading the applications and documents or for questions about the Application Questions and/or the Instructions, please contact your State Agency first, then you can use the email listed here: WICHQ-SFPD@fns.usda.gov

Thank you

Best of luck on your application!

Awardees are expected to be announced during
August for WIC Breastfeeding Week



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State agencies have the discretion on when to make awardee announcements, many announce during WIC Breastfeeding Week, August 1-7, while others will make the awardee announcements later in the month of August. A full awardee list is made public on the USDA-FNS website in September, after all State agencies have notified their awardees. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/breastfeeding-award-excellence-awardees>

Thank you for taking the time to view this presentation. Best of luck on your application