

Breastfeeding Counselor FAQ

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How do I maintain my Breastfeeding Counselor accreditation?

Breastfeeding Counselors (BCs) are required to demonstrate support for the organization by actively working towards the mission, and by renewing their membership each year. Breastfeeding Counselors are required to regularly report their activities and helping contacts to the organization through the Community Contacts Activity Report (CCAR). Breastfeeding Counselors must also remain current in their breastfeeding knowledge and meet the continuing education requirement outlined below:

- Number of Continuing Education Recognition Points (CERPs): 20
- Time Period: 3 years
- Time frame: January to December, to begin the January after the BC's accreditation date.
- Unit mix: 20 from L-CERPs, or 15 L-CERPs and 5 additional units from either L-, E-, or R-CERPs.

Where can I find information about Continuing Education opportunities?

To assist Breastfeeding Counselors with locating continuing education opportunities, the Breastfeeding Resource and Information Department (BRAID) will post opportunities to the [BFUSA_BC_Discussion Yahoo! Group](#). Information about each of these opportunities will be stored in the files section of the [BFUSA BC Discussion Yahoo! Group](#) until the date of the event has passed. Other continuing education opportunities are often sponsored by local breastfeeding coalitions, colleges and universities, private lactation education companies, USLCA webinars, and La Leche League conferences.

What print resources are available to me to provide information and support to breastfeeding mothers and babies?

The recommended print resources for Breastfeeding Counselors are:

Counseling the Nursing Mother: A Lactation Consultant's Guide, Fifth Edition,
Jones & Bartlett Publishers; 5th edition (2010)

Breastfeeding Answers Made Simple: A Guide for Helping Mothers
Nancy Mohrbacher IBCLC, FILCA
Hale Publishing, LP; (2011)

Medications and Mothers Milk: A Manual of Lactational Pharmacology
Thomas W. Hale, PhD
Hale Publishing, LP; 14th edition (2010)

Whom should I contact for help with a complicated breastfeeding question or situation?

Breastfeeding Counselors have easy access to evidence-based information through the Breastfeeding Resource And Information Department (BRAID). The BRAID provides up-to-date information to Breastfeeding Counselors and assists them with difficult helping situations and establishing contacts with health professionals when needed.

How can a Breastfeeding Counselor (BC) contact a member of the BRAID for assistance?

A BC should use a [BRAID Contact Form](#) found in the "For Volunteers" section of the Breastfeeding USA website, completing as much information as possible to assist the BRAID volunteer working with you to find appropriate resources.

You may contact a BRAID team member via email BRAID@BreastfeedingUSA.org or telephone Sharon at (315) 331-2140. Please mark the request as URGENT if a reply is needed immediately.

How do I report my Breastfeeding Counselor (BC) activities and community contacts?

Breastfeeding Counselors are required to complete a Community Contact Activity Report (CCAR) each month. The CCAR can be found [here](#) or under the "Forms/Reporting" option in the "For Volunteers"

section of the Breastfeeding USA website. All BCs need to begin reporting their community contacts the month following their accreditation as a BC.

If a BC has no community contacts to report, she still must complete the CCAR each month to reflect casual contacts and continuing education as well as contacts made while acting as a BC.

There are several Breastfeeding Counselors in my Community Chapter, how do we report our statistics?

When a Chapter has multiple Breastfeeding Counselors, each BC should report attendance for the activities and meetings she personally conducts or hosts. In a situation where more than one BC is conducting or hosting, the BCs should agree on who will report the attendance to avoid double-counting of statistics; each BC will report her personal helping contacts.

Will I be notified when my membership fees are up for renewal?

Yes, there is an automatic renewal notice sent to the email address associated with your membership approximately one month before your membership expires. Please ensure that you are logged into the website while purchasing your membership online so that it will be properly recorded as a renewal. If you allow your membership to expire, you will be contacted by Membership Services as a second reminder. Further correspondence will come from Volunteer Support, followed by the Board of Directors.

Is there a monetary penalty if my membership fees are not paid in a timely manner?

No, there is not a financial penalty for paying your membership fees late. However, if your annual membership (presently \$25) expires, your volunteer responsibilities may be suspended until your membership has been renewed.

What are the consequences if my membership lapses?

When a Breastfeeding Counselor does not pay her membership fees, she is not allowed to vote in an organization election or for issues before the Voting Membership.

A Breastfeeding Counselor with an expired membership greater than **60 days** will have her Chapter information removed from the BC listing on the website.

A Breastfeeding Counselor with an expired membership greater than **90 days** will be:

- prohibited from providing breastfeeding help directly to mothers
- removed from committee work
- removed from the roster of active BCs
- no longer considered an accredited BC, which includes loss of liability coverage, until the BC has paid her membership fees in full and completed the reinstatement process.

If you are experiencing financial hardship or a specific time constraint for payment, please contact Finance@BreastfeedingUSA.org, to discuss possible solutions **before** your membership has expired. The finance committee will work with you on a payment plan.

What is the insurance provided by Breastfeeding USA?

Breastfeeding USA provides two types of insurance for Breastfeeding Counselors. The first is General Liability that covers your meetings and other public gatherings. Some people call this type “Slip and Fall” insurance. The other is Professional Liability Insurance. This covers a BC and Breastfeeding USA in the unlikely event of a malpractice law suit. Even though you are not acting in a professional capacity, it is the same type of policy carried by professionals.

How may I obtain proof of liability insurance (Certificate of Insurance) required for my meeting location?

Please email Finance@BreastfeedingUSA.org.

I cannot log in to the website, who can help me?

If you have forgotten your password please follow this [link](#) to request a password reset. A new password will be sent to the email you used to establish your membership with Breastfeeding USA. If you have a new email address, please log into the website using your user name (First name space Last name) and password, and you will see your account information. Click on Edit, where you will see your old email address. Update with new email and then save it at the bottom of the page. If your email address has changed and you have forgotten your password, please notify Membership@BreastfeedingUSA.org.

May I use my personal phone number or email for Breastfeeding USA work?

Yes, of course! Breastfeeding USA does not have funding to provide phone service for Breastfeeding Counselors. Some Community Chapters are also setting up Google Voice accounts to supply voicemail for the chapter.

You may also choose to set up a new email address with a free provider (like Yahoo! or Gmail) with a special Breastfeeding USA identifier, and set that address up to forward automatically to your personal email account. A specific Breastfeeding USA email provides a greater degree of privacy for you as a Breastfeeding Counselor (for example: JaneBfUSA@; Cathy_Breastfeeding_USA@; Patty.BfUSA@).

As a Breastfeeding Counselor, do I need to be a part of a Community Chapter?

No. If a Breastfeeding Counselor does not plan to regularly provide direct help to breastfeeding mothers she may choose not to be part of a Community Chapter, and may continue to help the organization by volunteering on a committee. However, Breastfeeding Counselors are listed on the website by State and Chapter to help people locate services. Including yourself on the Community Chapter listing helps Breastfeeding USA have a greater presence to serve breastfeeding mothers.

Is a Community Chapter required to host meetings, answer emails, and take calls?

No, you may tailor your Chapter's support offerings to your availability and the needs of your community. Breastfeeding Counselors can choose to serve mothers through:

- email support
- phone support
- hosting regular face-to-face meetings
- home visits
- any combination of email, phone, and in-person support

You may also join and be listed as a Breastfeeding Counselor in an established Community Chapter.

Is there a particular format I must use for Chapter meetings?

Community Chapter meetings must be facilitated by a Breastfeeding Counselor. The Chapter meetings and activities may be conducted in various formats (including round-table discussions, breastfeeding classes, and drop-in social events) that are appropriate for your local community.

When will my Community Chapter be recognized as "official?"

When you are accredited by the Education Committee as a Breastfeeding Counselor, you may officially represent Breastfeeding USA and help mothers one-on-one or in a group setting. Your Chapter is "official" once you determine what type of volunteer helping you will provide and connect with Volunteer BC Support. You do not need to ask permission, but you do need to communicate when your Community Chapter services begin, and what those services are.

Whom do I contact to have my Chapter listed or update the information on the "[Find a BC](#)" webpage?

Please email BCSupport@BreastfeedingUSA.org to provide the Volunteer Support Committee with the following information:

- State
- Community Chapter Name
- Services provided (meeting, phone, email)
- BC contact name (most BCs choose to only list their first names)
- BC email address (if applicable)
- BC phone number (if applicable)
- Facebook page/group link (if applicable)
- Meeting information (date/time and location if applicable)

How do I contact the Breastfeeding USA Facebook Administrators to publicize my Chapter on the national Facebook or Twitter pages?

Please email SocialNetworking@breastfeedingusa.org with your Chapter name, as well as suggested text and a link for your announcement three days in advance.

What do I need to know to establish my Chapter on Facebook?

BC Support has two test examples on Facebook: one is a "Page;" the other is a "Group." Before you establish your Chapter on Facebook, you may want to request access to these test examples to explore which option you would prefer to use for your Chapter by emailing BCSupport@BreastfeedingUSA.org [Further reading Social Media FAQ Available Spring 12]

What is the budget for my Chapter?

Breastfeeding USA has budgeted funds for Breastfeeding Counselors and Community Chapters to cover expenses incurred to deliver local Breastfeeding USA services. Because the organization has limited assets, we do not have unlimited funds for expense reimbursement. We encourage Breastfeeding Counselors to contact the finance committee Finance@BreastfeedingUSA.org in advance of any expenditure to determine whether there is budget monies available for reimbursement. Currently each Community Chapter is budgeted \$75.00 for printing, mailing, and other general expenses. Breastfeeding Counselors that have not submitted their Community Contact Activity Reports (CCAR) must submit all outstanding monthly CCARs prior to receiving the budgeted grant.

May my Chapter open its own bank account?

No, the finance committee maintains control of all Breastfeeding USA accounts, and Community Chapters may not open their own accounts. This structure helps to manage the organization's limited funds in the best way possible and minimizes accounting and reporting requirements. The goal is to make Breastfeeding USA funds as available as possible for Breastfeeding Counselors and Chapters to carry out the mission, while ensuring adequate protection of the national organization's assets.

May my Chapter seek localized funds for specific items or events?

Yes, if your Chapter solicits funds from a local entity and that entity donates to Breastfeeding USA on behalf of your Chapter, those funds can be used for your Chapter's expenses. You may not solicit funds through the US Mail or email until you check with the Finance Department to determine if your state has any restrictions on such mailings.

How may I receive funds or reimbursement for my local Chapter and pay for supplies we need?

Fortunately, it doesn't require a lot of money to provide quality, evidence-based local breastfeeding support! However, some Chapter activities may be enhanced by purchasing supplies or materials, and local publicity and advocacy efforts sometimes require funding. Breastfeeding USA has budgeted up to \$75 this fiscal year for each Community Chapter to spend as needed. Please contact Finance@BreastfeedingUSA.org with an estimate and description of your planned expenses.

Breastfeeding USA expects all Breastfeeding Counselors and other volunteers to be prudent about expenses for the organization, and to help it in budgeting for future years. After making any expenditure for the organization, even if not requesting reimbursement for the expense, BCs should complete the

[Expense Reimbursement Form](#) and submit it to Accounts Payable. If reimbursement is desired, Expense Reimbursement Forms must be received by the tenth (10th) of the month to be paid in that same month. Submitting an Expense Reimbursement Form helps the Finance Committee understand the costs involved in operating Community Chapters, which helps to develop better budgets for the organization.

How can I to respond to the question, “Why is another mother-to-mother organization needed in my community?” or statements that Breastfeeding USA is the same as other mother-to-mother organizations that support breastfeeding?

The 2011 CDC Breastfeeding Report Card identified a huge disparity in the need for breastfeeding support and the number of available mother-to-mother breastfeeding helpers and state health department full-time employees dedicated to breastfeeding. Breastfeeding USA aims to increase access to evidence-based, mother-to-mother information and support. <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/reportcard3.htm>

Breastfeeding USA is a membership organization, and national volunteers have the right vote for Board members as well as major changes within the organization. Another unique feature of Breastfeeding USA is its centralized and comprehensive education system, which provides for continuity of training for Breastfeeding Counselors.

When was Breastfeeding USA established?

Breastfeeding USA was established over a few years time. Discussion began in mid-2008, with earnest planning in 2009; the organization officially incorporated on November 17, 2010. The organization went live on December 10, 2010 with the launch of its Facebook page, followed by the website launch on December 14. More information about the organization’s history is available [here](#).

What does it mean to be a “Voting Member?”

All Breastfeeding Counselors are voting members of the organization, as are some key national volunteers who are not Breastfeeding Counselors. [The Bylaws](#) and Policy Manual grant voting members certain rights and privileges, which include voting for the members of the Board of Directors and participating in the Annual Meeting. As voting members, Breastfeeding Counselors have a voice in the governance of the organization.

Am I required to vote in all elections for the organization?

No, but as a Voting Member you are encouraged to participate in the voting process.