

## Alaska WIC BFPC Policies

### Communications Policy- Social Media

The use of social media tools is a powerful channel to reach target audiences with strategic, effective and user-centric health interventions. The following guidelines are in part based off the CDC Social Media Tools Guidelines and Best Practices.

#### ***Text Messaging Guidelines***

SMS- Short Message Service or (Text messaging) is a breakthrough communication medium as evidenced by growth year after year. Text messages are messages that can be sent and received on a mobile phone. With the use of text messaging available on 98% of all phone, the number of text messaging users continues to grow. Text messaging is a simple and easy way to reach a large portion of the general population with important health messages.

Text messages should be short and concise. Suggested length should be less than 160 characters, including spaces, punctuation, and links. To test the length of a text message, go to <http://nchm-dvss1.cdc.gov/count.html>.

The message content should be topical and written at no more than an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Use punctuation only if required for clarity or emphasis. Because text messages have a character limit, abbreviations are often used. Abbreviations should only be used when they are easily understood and do not change the meaning of the message. Some common abbreviations are:

- Info for Information
- & for And
- Msg for Message
- U for you
- Ty for thank you
- Yw for your welcome
- Lol for laugh out loud
- Omw for on my way if going to meet client
- Ttyl for talk to you later
- C, b, 2 and 4 for their respective words

Some common abbreviations that should not be used which can cause confusion are IMPT (important), Rt (right), Lt (left), Br (breast) and BF (breastfeeding, confused with boy friend).

The message should clearly be labeled so that users can easily determine the sender of the message. Phone numbers should be formatted so the user can click-to-call the number automatically from their cell phone.

Texting or making use of electronic mail functions while driving is prohibited. A driver's primary responsibility is to be in control of their vehicle; texting while driving clearly interferes with that

responsibility. This includes the time waiting for a traffic signal to change. Either turn off the cell phone or place cell phone on “airplane mode” while traveling in a vehicle. Additionally the use of hand-held cell phone(s) for BFPC purposes may not be used while driving.

### ***Confidentiality and Electronic Mediums***

Texting, cell phone use, and social networking medium’s use needs to meet the strict compliance for WIC’s data protection and confidentiality requirement. WIC regards the protection of an individual’s confidentiality as one of the greatest responsibilities and is bound by both federal and state law to safeguard the confidentiality of the individuals participating in the BFPC program. BFPC services provided via texting, personalized cell phone calls or social networking medium such as Facebook or Bebo require a signed release from the client before receiving such service.

No use of identifiable data such as social security numbers, driver’s license, credit card, or PIN numbers should ever be used in text messaging, cell phones or social networking mediums.

### ***Facebook***

Facebook is a social network service and website that has more than 500 million active users, which is about one person for every fourteen in the world. Users may create a personal profile, add other users as friends and exchange messages. Additionally users may join common interest user groups.

Due to security concerns related to participating in social networking sites, all participation must occur off the AKWIC network. To avoid security risks, do not use third party tools that require you to provide Facebook usernames and passwords.

The Facebook profile page should be set to “private” and only those who have been accepted and approved can have access to information. Any comments that are blogged must be monitored, moderated and managed within the maintained site. Once “Friends” are approved, vigilance is required to make sure that the friend’s profile hasn’t changed to include inappropriate content, an inappropriate profile image or malicious code. A statement about disclaimers about friends and content on their profiles should be posted on the site, as well as a clear policy about accepting friends. The USDA non-discrimination statement is required to be part of the Facebook page.

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, gender identity, sex, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form found on line at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S.

Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue. S.W., Washington D.C. 20250-9410, by fax at (202) 690-7442 or email at [Program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.intake@usda.gov).

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”

#### Routine Social Media Site Monitoring

1. Daily review of profile pages to ensure that content is still correct and hasn't been compromised.
2. Hide the friends list so no one else can see it.
3. Monitor the comments section so only appropriate comments can be left.
4. Routinely scan links to see that the destination pages have not been compromised or being used to promote attacks.

The WIC Coordinator and the BFPC Supervisor are responsible for oversight of the BFPC(s) assigned to monitor Facebook. Regularly scheduled BFPC meetings are to include discussions about appropriate comments, current links and Facebook page content to ensure accurate and reliable information in a secure, private site. Peer counselors are encouraged to notify the WIC Coordinator and/or the BFPC Supervisor about any questions or concerns that lie outside their scope of practice or knowledge. The WIC Coordinator and / or BFPC Supervisor should be checking the Facebook site as well to assure compliance with BFPC policy. WIC Coordinator/BFPC Supervisor are to develop the social media and related protocols on use and maintenance, train BFPC on the appropriate use of the social media, and include a report on the media and its use in the Annual Peer Counselor Report.

Local agencies that use social media must:

1. Develop an agency approved protocol on:
  - a. How BFPC will access and use the media, including setting limits on its use
  - b. How agency staff will monitor and maintain the media
2. Not post any of the following:
  - a. Violent, obscene, profane, hateful, or racist comments
  - b. Comments that threaten or defame any person or organization
  - c. Solicitations, advertisements, or endorsements of any financial, commercial, or non-governmental agency
  - d. Comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity
  - e. Unsolicited photos
  - f. Any comments with client names
3. Monitor posts for:
  - a. Continual off-topic comments by a single user
  - b. Repetitive comments copied and pasted by multiple users

c. Inappropriate comments