



IDENTIFICATION

Department		Position Title	
Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority		Lactation Consultant	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region	
48-16583	Yellowknife	Territorial Operations/Clinical Integration/ Health Services	

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Lactation Consultant (LC) is responsible for supporting the implementation of the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) and other quality improvement initiatives related to infant feeding within all regions of the Northwest Territories including Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA), Tẖcẖ Community Services Agency (TCSA), and Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA) to ensure that families have access to accurate information and support to safely feed their babies.

The LC is responsible for developing and delivering staff and parent education that increases knowledge about and competency in lactation and infant feeding and for participating in quality improvement (QI) processes to monitor the impact of such education.

The LC is responsible for providing (in person and virtual) consultation services to parents/caregivers who require an advanced level of infant feeding support to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge required to make informed-decisions and safely feed their children.

SCOPE

Reporting to the Territorial Manager, Midwifery, the Lactation Consultant plays a key role in creating a culturally safe and relationship-based service that contributes to the achievement of increased rates of breast/chest feeding. The incumbent will be supported by the Territorial Midwifery Team.



The LC will take part in establishing relationships between their position and the territorial and regional service areas they support. They will work with an interprofessional team, the communities they serve and with the support of their manager to identify the most effective ways for the LC to offer HCP support and education and to establish referral pathways for accessing consultation services.

The LC is a leader in staff education and quality-improvement. The incumbent works collaboratively to identify learning needs of HCPs and to offer training and mentorship opportunities to HCPs and allied health workers across the Northwest Territories (NWT). As a core member of the Territorial BFI Committee the LC supports birthing facilities to implement the BFI standards and participates actively in the continuous quality improvement activities of the health and social services system. The LC may also provide clinical care when consulted by HCPs for complex infant feeding cases.

The LC provides leadership in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of educational activities for both health professionals and clients/families. The incumbent contributes to the development of standards of care, policies and procedures and guidelines pertaining to breast/chest feeding and infant feeding, ensuring that these are in-line with current best-practices, NWT legislation, Accreditation Canada Service Standards, the Department of Health and Social Services approved standards, NTHSSA policy, and serve to meet the needs of NWT residents.

The LC collaborates with the Systemic Design and Integration Unit, including the Lead, Early Childhood Development, at the Department of Health and Social Services and Community, Culture and Innovation division, to implement the Territorial Infant Feeding Education and Training Framework, support the dissemination of newly developed infant feeding resources and practice support tools, and inform the development of a Reproductive, Perinatal, Infant, Child Health and Indigenous Birthwork Model of Care in the NWT.

The LC works collaboratively with Community Health Nurses (CHNs), Public Health Nurses (PHNs), Registered Midwives (RMs), Physicians, the Obstetrics teams at Stanton Territorial Hospital (STH) and Inuvik Regional Hospital (IRH), and other HCPs throughout the NWT to provide clinical consultation for complex infant feeding cases. The LC understands the cultural context of infant feeding and uses a trauma-informed approach to their clinical role in assessing and addressing infant feeding problems. They draw on their clinical expertise in the anatomy and physiology of lactation to identify root-causes of feeding challenges and work with parents/caregivers to support their infant feeding goals. The LC identifies signs and symptoms that may require treatment beyond the scope of their position and initiates timely consultation with appropriate HCPs as required.



The position functions in association with interdisciplinary primary health care teams and community health centres and within an integrated territorial reproductive and children's health team.

The NTHSSA is the single provider of all health and social services in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłıchǫ regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-indigenous persons. Health and social services include the full range of primary, secondary, and tertiary health services and social services including family services, protection services, care placements, mental health, addictions, and developmental activities, delivered by more than 1,400 health and social services staff.

Under the direction of the Minister of Health and Social Services, the NTHSSA was established to move toward one integrated delivery system as part of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) transformation strategy. The NTHSSA sets clinical standards, procedures, guidelines, and monitoring for the entire Northwest Territories. While the TCSA operates under a separate board, and the HRHSSA remains separate in the interim, Service Agreements will be established with these boards to identify performance requirements and ensure adherence to clinical standards, procedures, guidelines, and policies as established by the NTHSSA.

Cultural safety is an outcome where Indigenous peoples feel safe and respected, free of racism and discrimination, when accessing health and social services. Relationship-based care is fundamental to cultural safety because it prioritizes the need for trusting, caring and ongoing relationships between patients and clients with providers. Embedding a culturally safe approach in Health and Social Services has been identified as critical to supporting equitable access to care with the long-term goal of improving health outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

The incumbent is expected to model, honour and promote a culturally safe environment at all times, including practicing from a perspective that is anti-racist and trauma-informed, employing self-reflection to encourage the professional growth and whole person development of self and others. Indigenous worldviews, practices, and customs must also be respected.

The LC practices in compliance with the Scope of Practice for International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) Certificate, the Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs, the Clinical Competencies for the Practice of International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants, and the strategic goals of the NTHSSA and GNWT health care system.

The incumbent represents the NTHSSA in meetings and conferences. This includes creating and delivering presentations about infant feeding and lactation, the BFI and other infant-feeding related QI initiatives to colleagues within the NWT, management, or other levels of leadership, as well as to external stakeholders and other professionals with an interest in lactation and infant feeding.



RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provides training and mentoring to staff and community members throughout the NWT to increase knowledge, skills and abilities related to breast/chestfeeding, human lactation, and safe infant-feeding in accordance to approved resources.

- Acts as an advocate for breast/chestfeeding and protects, promotes, and supports breast/chestfeeding as the biological norm.
- Identifies opportunities to build capacity for the support of breast/chestfeeding, human lactation, and safe infant feeding within the NWT, both within the formal health system and for community-based supports.
- Leads the development of curriculum and delivery of workshops about infant-feeding for health and social services professionals.
- Leads the development of client and community education tools such as written/print material, multimedia campaigns, or other information sharing tools.
- Provides mentorship opportunities to increase the hands-on skills of health services providers.
- Uses the principles of adult-education when teaching clients, HCPs, and others in the community.
- Collaborates with the Territorial Manager, Midwifery, the Territorial and regional Midwifery Teams, the Territorial BFI QI Committee, and other stakeholders to develop and revise policies, procedures and guidelines that align with the BFI best practice and community-based and local Indigenous knowledge.

2. Leads and supports continuous quality improvement in the field of breast/chest feeding and human lactation.

- Leads BFI knowledge translation and mobilization efforts with guidance and support from the Territorial BFI QI Committee and the Territorial Midwifery Program.
- Identifies and is actively involved in clinical audit activities related to lactation and BFI, providing evaluation, feedback, and support to facility-based BFI Committees to test and implement recommended improvements.
- Contributes to the development and revision of policies, procedures and guidelines that support the quality, safety, and consistent delivery of services relevant to breast/chest feeding and infant feeding.
- Coordinates the establishment of quality standards and preparation of materials to meet BFI accreditation and certification requirements as related to the LC position.
- Identifies gaps in preventative services and access to continuity of service.
- Contributes to monitoring and evaluating the impact of the LC services with the implementation of Evidence-based Practice for Improving Quality (EPI-Q) initiatives.



3. Supports practices which promote breast/chest feeding and discourages practices which interfere with breast/chest feeding.

- Promotes and adheres to the principles of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, and subsequent resolutions, and the World Health Organization Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.
- Promotes clinical/service and frontline management decisions that are culturally safe, anti-racist, trauma-informed, and family centered.

4. Provides trauma-informed lactation consultation and assistance with breast/chest feeding, human lactation and safe infant feeding to clients across the NWT in both virtual and in-person settings (community and hospital-based).

- Provides specialized and comprehensive in-person and virtual assessments of parents/caregivers and their children as required to support breast/chest feeding, human lactation and safe infant feeding and resolve challenges related to infant feeding.
- Acknowledges parent/caregiver and child health and mental health status in the context of infant feeding and breast/chest feeding and offers referrals for further assessment and/or support as needed.
- Considers parent/caregiver and child needs within the context of their family and community.
- Develops and supports the implementation of individualized feeding plans in consultation with the client and multi-disciplinary care team and ensures clients understand and agree with the plans.
- Carefully chooses a method of feeding when supplementation is necessary and uses strategies to maintain breast/chest feeding to meet the client's goals.
- Communicates feeding plans orally and in writing with other HCPs involved in the client's care as needed.
- Provides evidence-based information about use, during breast/chest feeding and human lactation, of medications (over-the-counter and prescription), alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other substances including herbs and natural supplements, and their potential impact on milk production and child safety.
- Integrates cultural, psychosocial, and nutritional aspects of breast/chest feeding, human lactation and safe infant feeding.
- Supports parents/caregivers to identify supports within their community including cultural knowledge about infant feeding.
- Supports informed decision making and provides support and encouragement to successfully meet the infant feeding goals as determined by families.
- Uses effective counseling skills when interacting with clients and other health care team members.
- Uses the principles of family-centered care while maintaining a collaborative, supportive relationship with clients.



- Identifies the need for and coordinates referral to other health care professionals or community services and ensures the client can access the necessary services.
- Documents care provided in the electronic medical record or hospital charts, in accordance with NTHSSA standards.
- Adheres to NTHSSA and GNWT privacy standards and ensures client confidentiality.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

Approximately 50% of the incumbent's day will require the incumbent to stand or be mobile for extended periods of time, assuming awkward positions while providing assessment and care. When providing care at a home visit, the incumbent is frequently carrying supplies and/or equipment up and down stairs as well as into and out of a vehicle.

Environmental Conditions

While providing care, the incumbent may be exposed to communicable diseases, body fluids, hazardous materials (toxic cleaning and sterilizing solutions). In addition, while performing home visits the incumbent may encounter unsanitary conditions, pets, second-hand smoke, and other allergens.

This position requires overnight duty travel several times a year and for multiple days at a time to other communities in the NWT to provide staff education and clinical consultation services.

Sensory Demands

Approximately 50% of the incumbent's day will be spent providing clinical care, where the incumbent is required to use the combined senses of sight, touch, smell and hearing during in-person and virtual client assessment and the provision of clinical care. The presence of family members, friends or other health care providers may cause distractions. The incumbent must remain focused on the needs and goals of the client.

Approximately 50% of the incumbent's work will involve preparation and delivery of teaching materials, attending meetings, providing phone consultations and other duties at a desk and computer workstation with no unusual sensory demands.

Mental Demands

The work environment is dynamic and frequently changing depending on the needs of the clients as well as their location. The position responds to multiple overlapping demands with shifting priorities and frequent interruptions daily. The incumbent is required, during regular hours, to respond to urgent or emergent situations which may include emotionally intense



experiences that may lead to mental fatigue and stress including supporting families who have experienced pregnancy or infant loss.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of human lactation and infant feeding at the level required for certification as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant as outlined in the Clinical Competencies for the practice of International Board Certified Lactation Consultants, Scope of Practice for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants and the Code of Professional Conduct for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants.
- Knowledge of Indigenous health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, regional Indigenous teachings and practices, and the way in which culture and community impact the experience of health care and intersect with infant feeding.
- Knowledge of colonial history and contexts for understanding inequities (social determinants of health) in health outcomes and access to health and social services, including the residential school system and systemic racism and how these intersect with infant feeding.
- Knowledge of the principles of adult education and interpersonal skills including effective communication, coaching and motivation in order to provide mentoring and education to health care providers.
- Knowledge of the BFI in Canada and the path to designation including the role of the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada.
- Knowledge and ability to assess infant feeding difficulties in relation to both the parent/caregivers and the infant/child.
- Knowledge of biological, physical and behavioral sciences in order to recognize, interpret and prioritize findings and determine and implement a plan of action based on accepted standards of practice.
- Knowledge and ability to operate and care for tools common to infant feeding such as breast/chest pumps, nipple shields, infant scales, and supplemental feeding devices.
- Knowledge of their professional regulatory framework and standards of practice.
- Knowledge and ability to support a change process; skilled in group dynamics and conflict resolution.
- Communication skills including listening, observing, identifying and reporting.
- Ability to build solid partnerships and strategic alliances based on trust and to work with a variety of people from different backgrounds and personalities.
- Organizational, time management, analytical, facilitation, and presentation skills to manage multi-disciplinary responsibilities in a timely and effective manner.
- Computer skills including word processing programs and spreadsheets.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.



Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

A Baccalaureate of Nursing or Baccalaureate degree in Midwifery (Health Sciences) and two (2) years of relevant experience; including a minimum of one (1) year of directly related experience providing breast/chestfeeding, lactation, and infant feeding support including prenatal education, intrapartum care, and postpartum.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Registration as a Registered Nurse or Registered Midwife (as applicable).

Current certification (or eligible for certification) as an International Board Certified Lactation consultant (commensurate training and experience will be considered).

Position Security (check one)

- ☐ No criminal records check required
- ☐ Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- ☒ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French language (check one if applicable)

- ☐ French required (must identify required level below)
 - Level required for this Designated Position is:
 - ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION
 - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
 - READING COMPREHENSION:
 - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
 - WRITING SKILLS:
 - Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐
- ☐ French preferred

Indigenous language: Select language

- ☐ Required
- ☐ Preferred