

## Perinatal and Infant Health: Breastfeeding Initiatives

*Objective 2.1: Promote and support cross-sector breastfeeding policies, practices, and environments to increase exclusive breastfeeding rates at 6 months.*

### **Activities During Federal Fiscal Year 2023**

Kansas Breastfeeding Infrastructure: According to the National Immunization Survey Breastfeeding Data for children born in 2020, Kansas breastfeeding initiation rates were at 86.2% which exceeds the national average of 83.1%. Kansas has fallen to 42nd in the nation for rates of infants exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months; a significant decrease from 14th in the previous year. Breastfeeding duration and exclusivity rates in Kansas are below the Healthy People 2030 goals.

Continued investment and support for a cross-sector approach to increasing access to culturally affirming breastfeeding education, support, and practices are essential to improving the health and prosperity of all Kansans. Collaboration with local and state partners such as the [Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition](#) (KBC) and Kansas Perinatal Community Collaborative sites have strengthened the impact of policies, systems, and environmental changes initiated to create a statewide culture of support for breastfeeding. Kansas has also continued its commitment to addressing racial and ethnic disparities, and incorporating behavioral health considerations into the promotion, protection, and support of breastfeeding.

The KBC continues to nurture a strong relationship with Title V to maintain effective and sustainable initiatives such as the [Kansas Business Case for Breastfeeding and the Breastfeeding Welcome Here](#) program. The KBC strives to use an [equity lens](#) to inform and guide their external work and also an “equity mirror” to examine internal structures, culture, and policies which aligns with Title V’s mission to support optimal breastfeeding practices among Black families. Several strategies have been deployed by the KBC to make progress towards this goal in FY2023:

- Increasing access to lactation support by African American providers such as breastfeeding peer counselors, doulas, International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC), and mid-level lactation providers that represent high-risk populations to provide culturally congruent support for women of color to initiate and maintain breastfeeding. Nine educational stipends funded by the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund (UMHMF) were awarded to individuals who self-identified as Latinx (4), Black (1), Indigenous (1), and multiracial (3) to support the achievement of mid-level or higher lactation credentials. Title V is funding the KBC’s [Color-Filled Breastfeeding: Clinical Lactation Training Program](#) to increase the number of IBCLCs of color across Kansas. The KBC has secured four clinical sites for student placement in Wichita, Topeka, and Kansas City (2).
- Supporting the implementation of community-centered, culturally relevant mother-to-mother, father, and grandparent breastfeeding support clubs for African Americans (e.g., Black Breastfeeding Clubs, Brown Baby Brigade, BSTARS, Reach our Brothers Everywhere, Fathers Uplift, Grandmothers Tea Project) to build capacity, and develop sustainable communities of support, for

breastfeeding families of color. Title V funding supported three stipends to support Chocolate Milk Café facilitators in Wichita, Topeka, and Kansas City. Additional culturally congruent breastfeeding support resources for Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous families are maintained on the [KBC Resources page](#).

- Broadening the establishment of breastfeeding coalitions for African Americans that connect health care providers, and the community, to local information and resources (e.g., African American Breastfeeding Coalition of Wyandotte County,) to foster a culture of change within communities. Title V funding supported five stipends to local leaders of Black Breastfeeding Coalitions in Topeka, Wichita, and Kansas City; a Latinx Breastfeeding Coalition in Southwest Kansas; and an Indigenous Breastfeeding Coalition in Kansas.



Title V continues to work with a variety of partners and programs to enhance the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding in Kansas.

**Communities Supporting Breastfeeding (CSB) Designation:** Title V has continued to support the KBC’s work to establish the CSB designation. The Kansas CSB program has received state and national attention and was selected as an Emerging Practice for [AMCHP’s Innovation Station](#) (2016) and was featured in AMCHP’s NPM 4 toolkit (2019). The CSB is also included in the [Kansas Health Matters database of promising practices](#). CSB is a designation from the KBC that recognizes communities that are building a culture of supporting breastfeeding. Communities achieve this designation utilizing a collaborative multi-sector approach, engaging stakeholders from public health, hospitals, early childhood development, and businesses through partnerships with local breastfeeding coalitions. The goal of a CSB community is to improve exclusive breastfeeding rates for infants at six months of age by cultivating systems of

breastfeeding support. Several established CSB communities are in the process of meeting the criteria to reach the new Community Supporting Breastfeeding Plus (CSB Plus) designation. Wichita achieved the CSB Plus designation in June 2023. This designation expands upon the CSB foundation to include addressing diversity and new systems of support including physician offices, emergency preparedness, city and/or county governments, faith-based organizations, schools, colleges and universities, correctional facilities, food pantries, doulas, and local health departments. The KBC hosted monthly “Office Hours” in FY2022-2023 to provide technical assistance to communities working toward the CSB Plus designation. The KBC also created a [toolkit](#) with resources to help guide communities as they develop strategies for implementation in their local MCH programs. As of October 2023, 27 communities achieved the CSB designation and one achieved the CSB Plus designation with support from KDHE, KBC, Kansas Health Foundation, UMHMF, and Prime Health Foundation.

[Local Breastfeeding Coalitions:](#) One of the six required CSB criteria is having an active local breastfeeding coalition. Over the past 10 years, the number of local breastfeeding coalitions increased from eight to 27 county coalitions, five regional coalitions, and five cultural coalitions covering 71 counties, or 68% of the state.

KBC’s Local Breastfeeding Coalition Section supports local coalitions by providing networking, learning opportunities, technical assistance and fostering the formation of new coalitions. In FFY 2023, the KBC’s Local Breastfeeding Coalition Section:

- Held bi-monthly meetings for local coalition leaders and advocates interested in forming a coalition to provide an opportunity for sharing and networking for 263 members.
- Hosted presentations from guest speakers with specialized knowledge in coalition building, strategic planning, and fiscal management.
- Featured success stories from local coalitions across the state and highlighted unique partnerships established by local leaders.
- Facilitated discussions on strengthening organizational viability and sustainability.

In addition to the Local Breastfeeding Coalition Section, the KBC supports local coalitions through:

- Additional education of training needs identified through the review of 36 Aid-to-Local grant applications that selected “Objective 2.1 Breastfeeding.” Findings were compiled for a presentation in August 2023 to Aid-to-Local grantees and others including resources and strategies to strengthen applications.
- Three statewide general meetings each year featuring speakers who are experts on topics of interest to local coalitions.
- Hosting the 2023 Kansas Breastfeeding Coalitions Conference drawing 201 attendees with 14 hours of education from national and local experts in lactation.

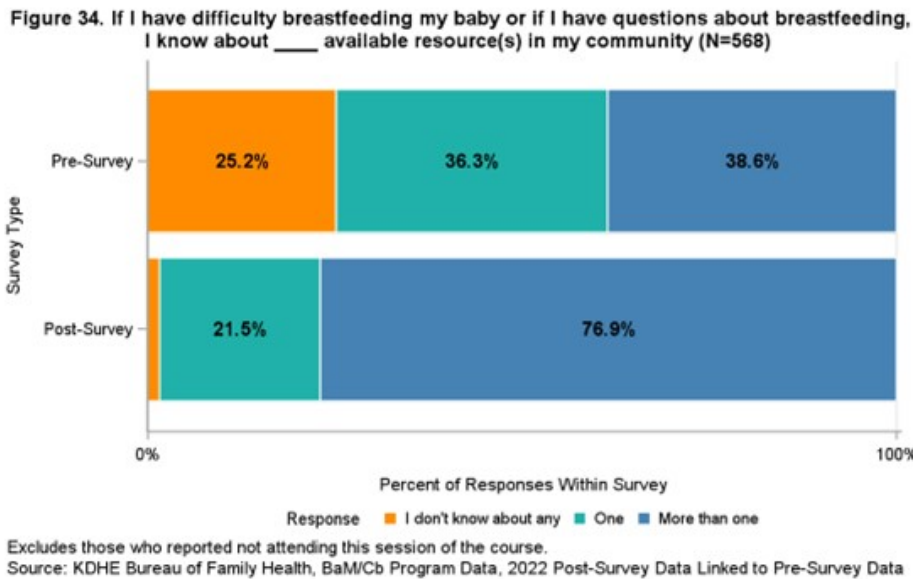
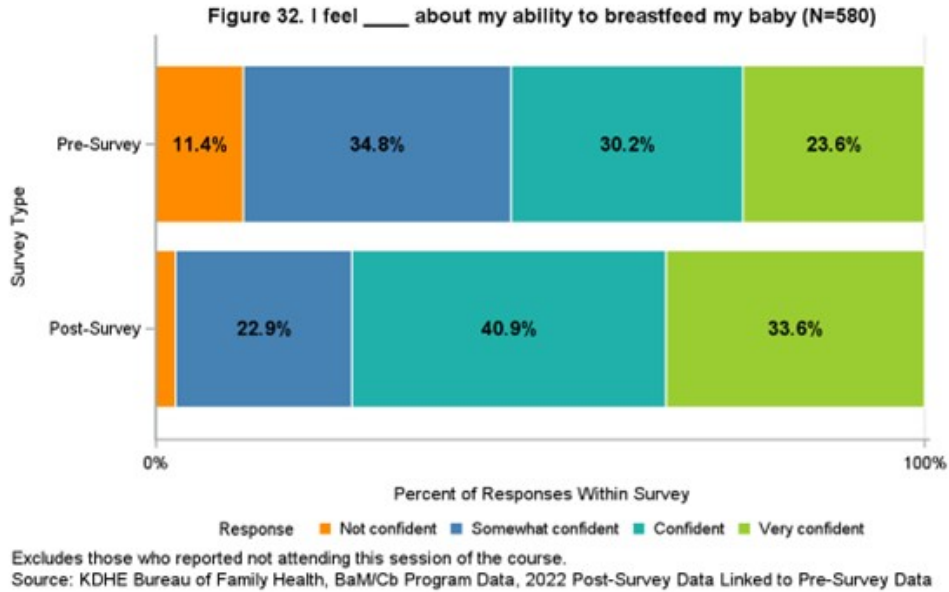
Maintaining and updating the [Tools for Coalitions](#) webpage with resources such as sample coalition documents, community needs assessment templates, project ideas for local coalitions, community engagement strategies, and tools for local coalitions

MCH-WIC-KBC-Becoming a Mom® (BaM) Program Collaboration: Working collaboratively across WIC, MCH, and BaM, as well as with community partners such as local hospitals and birthing centers, breastfeeding coalitions, and La Leche League groups, along with support from KBC, much progress has been made to improve breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates in Kansas. MCH Home Visitors are working alongside WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors (BFPC) and BaM facilitators to provide breastfeeding support to individuals in their homes and in group and clinic settings in both the prenatal and postpartum periods, providing consistent, repetitive messaging. The State WIC Director continued to promote and support local WIC staff to collaborate as BaM session facilitators, while also allowing local WIC budgets to include BaM incentives that support good nutrition and breastfeeding practices. This collaboration continued to be an integral component to local BaM program implementation and supports easy access and dual enrollment in both programs.

KBC reviews and updates the BaM Infant Feeding session curriculum annually. The 2023 revisions included: aligning with new best practices and policy changes from the AAP, CDC, and Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM); upgrading photos, videos, and images to increase racial and ethnic diversity; adding new engaging questions and activities; enhancing speaker notes, adding clarifying language, for ease of presenting. Alignment with the Kansas Baby-Friendly Hospital efforts continues to occur, assuring the curriculum meets Baby-Friendly Hospital requirements. Work was completed in early 2019 to produce a recorded training webinar for the Breastfeeding Integration Toolkit that is provided as part of the online resources for local program sites through the BaM private website. This addition reduced reliance on in-person training, thereby promoting greater long-term sustainability of efforts, and has proven to be vital as local programs continue to face significant staff turnover. BaM resources continued to be made available to WIC and MCH programs in counties across the state where KPCC/BaM sites are not in place.

According to the 2022 BaM State Aggregate Report, initiation rates were 94.6% (higher than the 87.1% state rate, according to Kansas Birth Certificate data, 2022), which we feel is reflective of efforts by KPCC partners to provide extensive education and support

around this priority. See data below reflecting the significant improvement in confidence of BaM participants in their ability to breastfeed and their knowledge of available breastfeeding support resources pre to post intervention, two significant variables effecting breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates.



## Perinatal/Infant Health

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### 2.1: Breastfeeding supports and education

Learn about the numerous breastfeeding support programs and initiatives your community can implement through the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition's [Programs & Activities](#). Lead or participate in local breastfeeding support initiatives, such as [Communities Supporting Breastfeeding Plus](#) or [Breastfeeding Friendly Local Health Department Designation](#).

Review [KBC's Racial and Ethnic Equity](#) resources and diversify your lactation support workforce to better engage and support populations with greater disparities through the [Color-Filled Breastfeeding: Clinical Lactation Training Program](#). Contact the [Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition](#) for support and guidance on building breastfeeding support groups and/or local coalitions led by and for communities of color.

The [Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition resource page](#) has an expansive collection of links to information, support, and education around a variety of topics for clients you serve. This page also links to a searchable local directory of resources, including continued and advanced [breastfeeding education](#).

Connect with [La Leche League](#) community leaders and explore how to start a breastfeeding support group.

Additionally, data consistently show the BaM Infant Feeding session as one of the highest ranking in “helpfulness of the session”, with nearly 96% rating it between very (35.5%) and extremely (60.1%) helpful. Although breastfeeding initiation rates across the state have improved steadily in recent years, there is continued work to be done to improve continuation and exclusivity rates at six months. KPCC partners around the state have acknowledged a lack of a structured follow-up process for the offering of support at targeted points following the initial postpartum home visit and lack of a system for data collection related to tracking continuation rates. In response, the P/I Health Consultants collaborated with KBC partners to present on “building a continuum of care” specific to breastfeeding support, to set the stage for ongoing conversation and presentations during the KPCC Conference that took place November 2022.

MCH Workforce Initiatives with KBC: The Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition reviewed, scored, and provided feedback on eight MCH Aid-to-Local grant applications. The Kansas Breastfeeding Conference and National Breastfeeding Month Panel with National WIC Association were promoted to local MCH grantees through an email listserv. Every local MCH program received a resource document at the beginning of the grant year that was tailored to the objectives they selected in their application. Section 2.1 Breastfeeding Supports and Education contained links to several Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition resources and education opportunities.

#### Local MCH Agencies:

The following are examples of how some of the local MCH grantee agencies have made progress toward objective 2.1 during the reporting period.

- Delivering Change provided one-on-one education to new mothers about the benefits of breastfeeding, for both mom and baby, how breastfeeding may look for each client, and how to get breastfeeding supplies through insurance or community resources. Education is provided at the Delivering Change office and in the home. Group education was provided during the Infant Feeding session of Becoming a Mom. They offered to schedule every postpartum woman that delivered at Stormont Vail an appointment with the Delivering Change

Breastfeeding Clinic within 24-48 hours post discharge. They maintained strong partnerships with the local OB/GYN office, pediatrician, and Konza Prairie Community Health Center to coordinate new mothers' continued participation in Delivering Change's lactation services. Many women were referred again to the Delivering Change Breastfeeding Clinic during their baby's pediatrician appointment.

- Kearny County Hospital is a hub for delivering babies in SW Kansas. They conducted six breastfeeding prenatal classes and documented 1,200 instances of one-on-one breastfeeding education with patients.
- Nemaha County Community Health Services had a 100% breastfeeding initiation rate among women receiving home visits. Their Certified Lactation Consultant (CLC) conducted 31 breastfeeding clinic visits at no cost to participants. This is an increase from previous years. They are working to training a second CLC.
- Riley County Health Department exceeded two of their goals related to increased breastfeeding among their clients.
  - Goal: 65% of MCH clients will breastfeed exclusively throughout the postpartum nursing visits (1, 3, and 5 month). Actual measure: 89.61% of MCH clients reported exclusively breastfeeding through the 5-month postpartum nursing visit.
  - Goal: 50% of infants in Riley County will be exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months of age. Actual measure: 66% of infants in Riley County reported exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months of age.
- Shawnee County Health Department asked all clients about their goals for feeding baby. All their staff completed Breastfeeding 101 training through KBC. They continued making referrals to their local breastfeeding clinics and WIC peer support breastfeeding educators. They provided printed education materials in English and Spanish.

### ***Plans for Federal Fiscal Year 2025***

Kansas Breastfeeding Infrastructure: While Kansas breastfeeding initiation (90.5%, 2022 Annual Summary of Vital Statistics) exceeds the national average, 6-month exclusivity rates (22.2%, National Immunization Survey, children born 2020) fall far below the national average and the Health People 2030 goals of 42.4% exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months. This requires continued focus on increasing families' access to strong community breastfeeding education, supports, and practices. In order to promote and support cross-sector breastfeeding policies, practices, and environments to increase breastfeeding duration and exclusivity, Title V will continue our strong partnership with the [Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition](#) (KBC) to support existing effective strategies (e.g., Business Case for Breastfeeding, Communities Supporting Breastfeeding, Breastfeeding Welcome Here) and to broaden and strengthen the establishment of local breastfeeding coalitions.

Breastfeeding initiatives should be available to all populations, however Title V is specifically interested in removing barriers and addressing racial disparities noted in state-level breastfeeding data, such as among the non-Hispanic Black population. While much work has been started with this focus, particularly through contracted KBC

supported projects, continuation and advancement of these efforts will be a focus for FY25. Examples of such efforts include:

- Increasing access to lactation support by African American providers such as breastfeeding peer counselors, doulas, International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants, and Certified Lactation Counselors that represent high-risk populations.
- Supporting the implementation and growth of community-centered, culturally relevant mother-to-mother, father, and grandparent breastfeeding support clubs for African Americans.
- Broadening the establishment of breastfeeding coalitions for African Americans that connect health care providers and the community to local information and resources.

MCH-WIC-KBC-Becoming a Mom (BaM) Program Collaboration: Assuring consistent, repeat, messaging around the benefits of breastfeeding (initiation and exclusivity) to both mothers and infants (as well as where/how to access breastfeeding support) across all MCH programs and services is a goal of Kansas Title V. To achieve this goal, collaboration must occur among the various programs. Training opportunities, curriculum content and other resources must be shared and promoted across programs. Efforts in this area have been very successful over the past several years, and Title V is committed to continuing this work in FY25. Breastfeeding curriculum, presentations, lesson and activity plans, as well as other resources originally developed for the BaM group prenatal education program, will continue to be adapted and shared for implementation in other settings and with disparity populations. Special focus will be given to developing a version of these resources for low-literacy and immigrant populations. Integration efforts between BaM, WIC, and MCH programs such as home visiting, Teen Pregnancy Targeted Case Management and Pregnancy Maintenance Initiative will continue to be a focus of the Perinatal/Infant (P/I) Health Consultant workplan in FY25. Accessibility of breastfeeding education and support will be a primary component of these efforts.

Title V and KBC partnership will continue to focus on improving access to breastfeeding education for providers and MCH workforce development. Efforts will include continued support of the Childcare Provider Training, local MCH staff focused webinars and training opportunities, as well as many other more broadly focused training opportunities. Title V encourages and supports staff participation in a variety of breastfeeding education courses. It is important to meet MCH staff where they are and provide information on all the options for breastfeeding education including 1, 3, or 5-day courses. Tools such as the Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition's [Landscape of Breastfeeding Support](#) which provides staff with the various certification programs and the [Lactation Support Provider Training Directory](#) from the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee are included in a comprehensive [Breastfeeding Integration Toolkit](#) which will continue to be enhanced and promoted for use by providers across programs and services.



Local MCH Agencies: The following are examples are local MCH grantee agencies plans toward Objective 2.1 during the plan period.

- CareArc will continue to educate prenatal and postpartum patients on the benefits of breastfeeding. Our Women's Health provider is attending our weekly breastfeeding meetings which can be attended by any breastfeeding patient in the community. She is also a certified lactation consultant and is able to schedule appointments with patients to address any specific breastfeeding needs and offer one on one support. Our infant population hasn't been large in the past so our numbers on this goal can vary widely with even one patient difference. We hope with continued marketing and retention of staff offering more services that we will see these numbers continue to rise.
- Linn County Health Department will expand and enhance the breastfeeding supports and education. During the BAM classes there is a session on breastfeeding and the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BFPC) will educate those women. Also, by being a part of the breastfeeding session of BAM it will also lead to the mothers that have been educated to feel comfortable to follow up if they are having trouble with their baby breastfeeding after delivery. We will continue to enhance and grow our Community Baby Shower, which always promotes and educates on breastfeeding. We will also continue to expand and promote breastfeeding services, support, and education through outreach activities. The current BFPC is going to become a Designated Breastfeeding Expert and one of our nurses is going to become a BFPC so we will have the expertise of two different supports for our breastfeeding moms.
- Mitchell County Health Department will enhance and expand our breastfeeding support and education and will take the next step by expanding opportunities for one-on-one visits. Currently, our Maternal Child Health Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) offers breastfeeding support through scheduled client appointments. We are beginning the process of collaborating with WIC within the health department to offer walk-in breastfeeding clinics.