



Creating a Diverse Next Generation in Lactation

October 12, 2023

Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition Annual Conference, St. Cloud MN

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Disclaimer

I have no actual or potential declarations in relation to this program that could be perceived as having a bearing on my presentation of this subject.

Objectives

01

Identify the three pathways to becoming an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant

02

List three barriers for peer counselors to advance in the field of lactation

03

Name three community partners that can assist peer counselors in advancing in the lactation field

Overview of today's presentation

How a pilot project provided educational and career advancement in lactation for a diverse group of breastfeeding peer counselors

What the Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition is working to advance a diverse lactation workforce in Minnesota

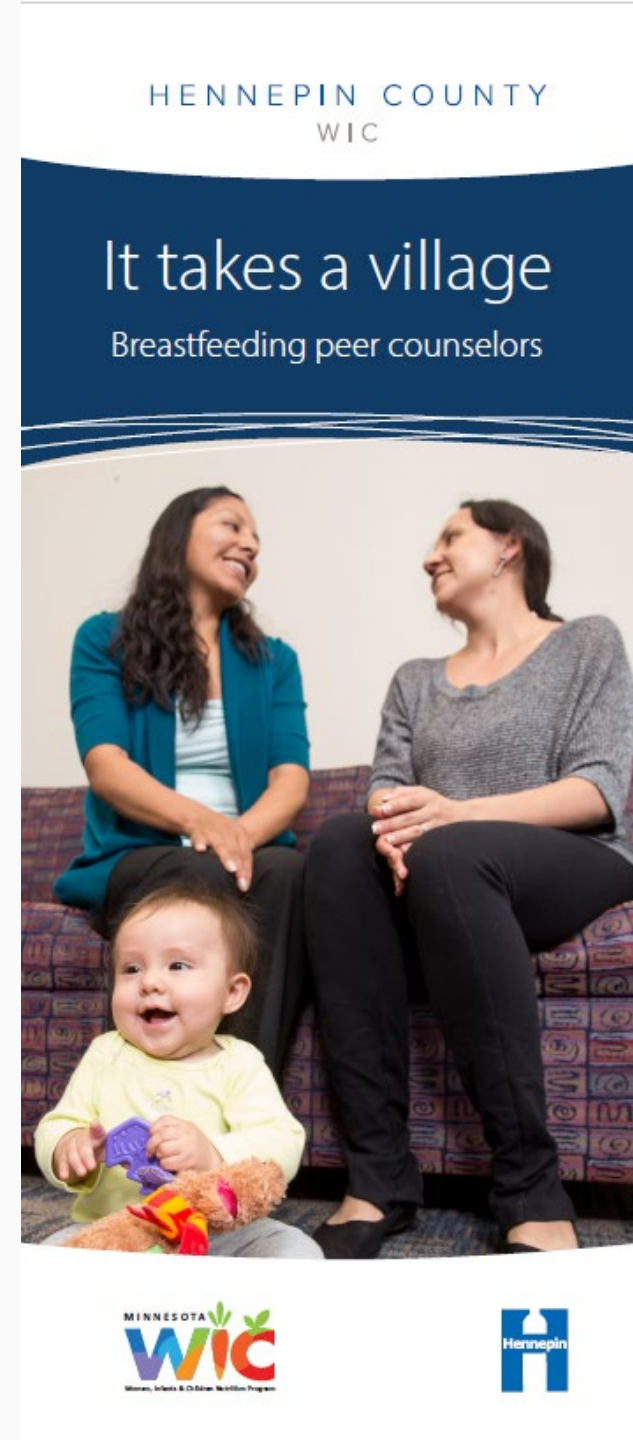
AHEAD grant background

- AHEAD = Advancing Health Equity to Achieve Diversity and Inclusion in WIC
- Two-year Walmart Foundation grant awarded to National WIC Association
- Component of grant sought “projects . . . guided by the promising practices that integrate a racial equity lens in WIC”
- Hennepin County selected as one of seven WIC agency sub-grantees
- Grant awards = \$55,000 July 2021 to February 2022

WIC breastfeeding peer counselors

- are past or current WIC participants with personal breastfeeding experience
- are mainly part-time (0.3 FTE) employees
- mirror the rich cultural background of the community served

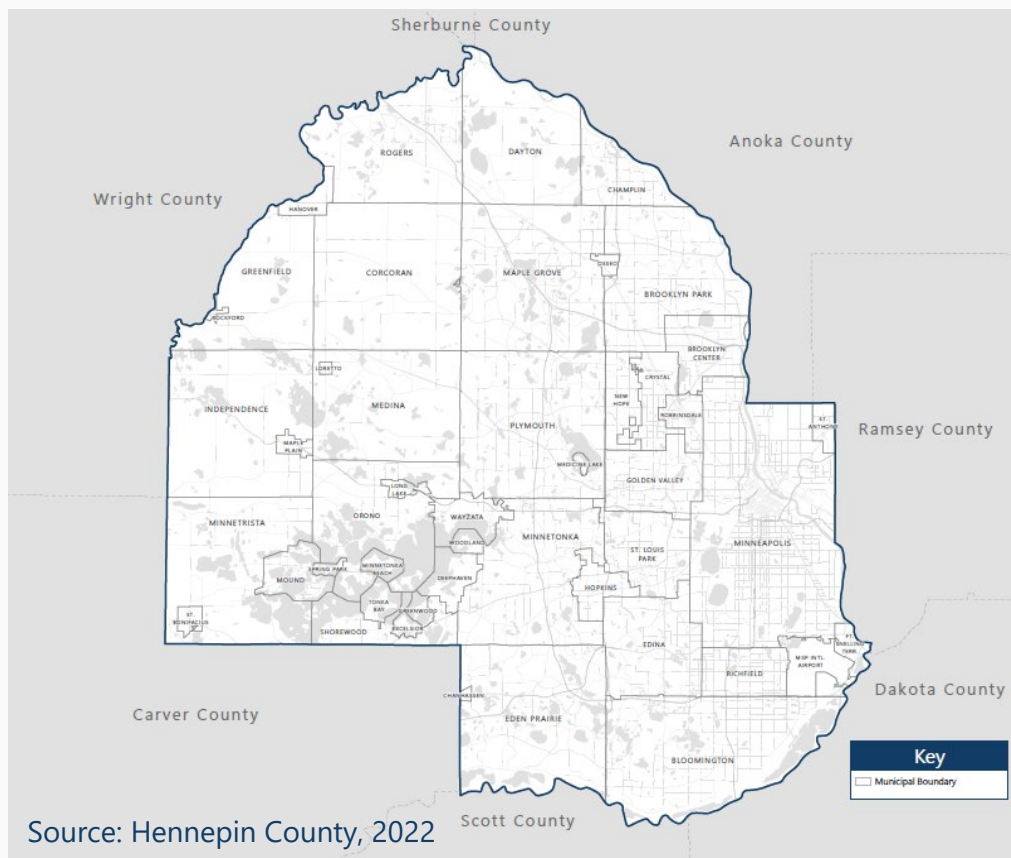
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Hennepin County background

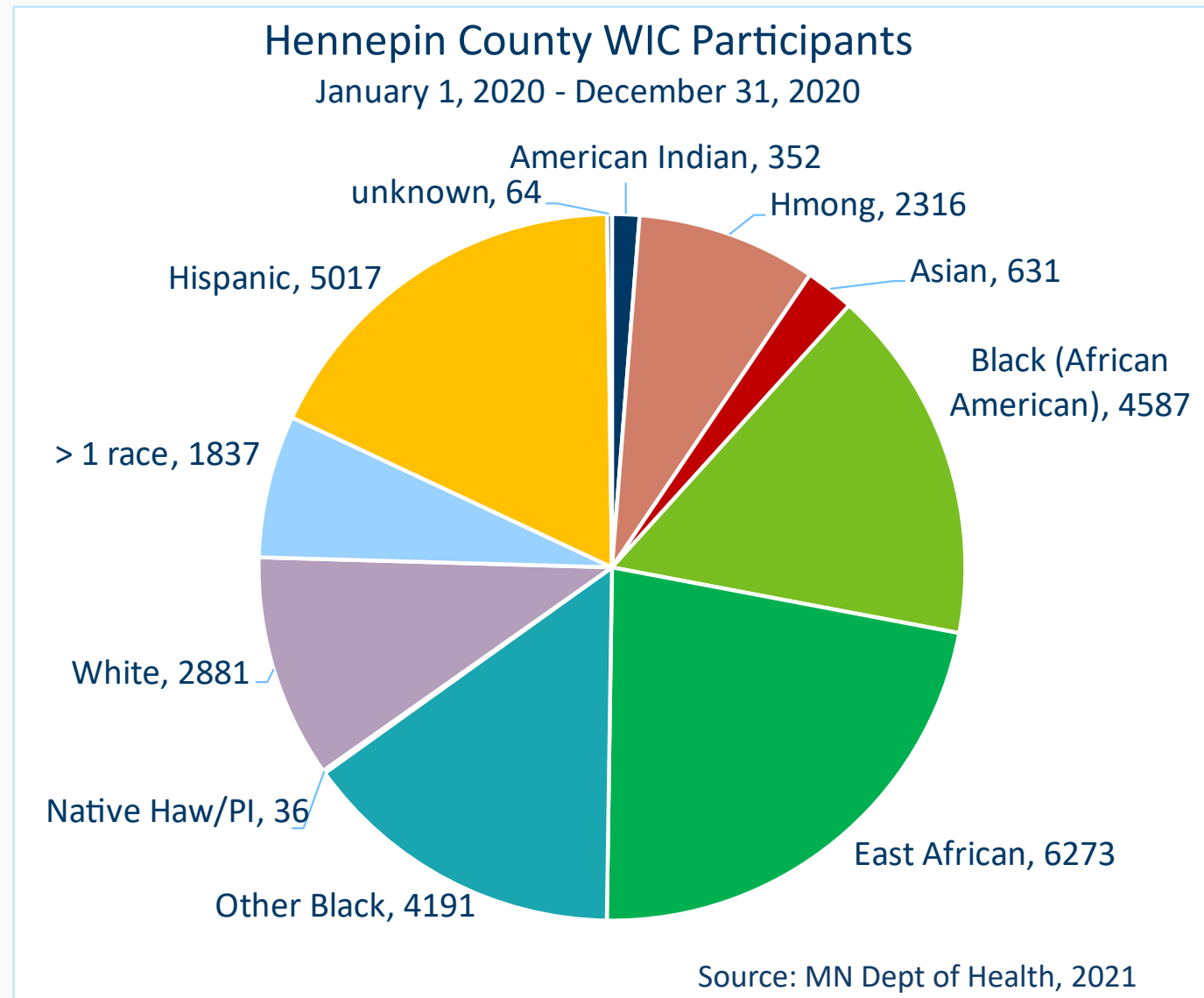
- Most populous county in Minnesota
- 22% of state's population (1.2 million residents)
- Most racially diverse county in Minnesota

(Hennepin County Public Health, 2019)



Hennepin County WIC

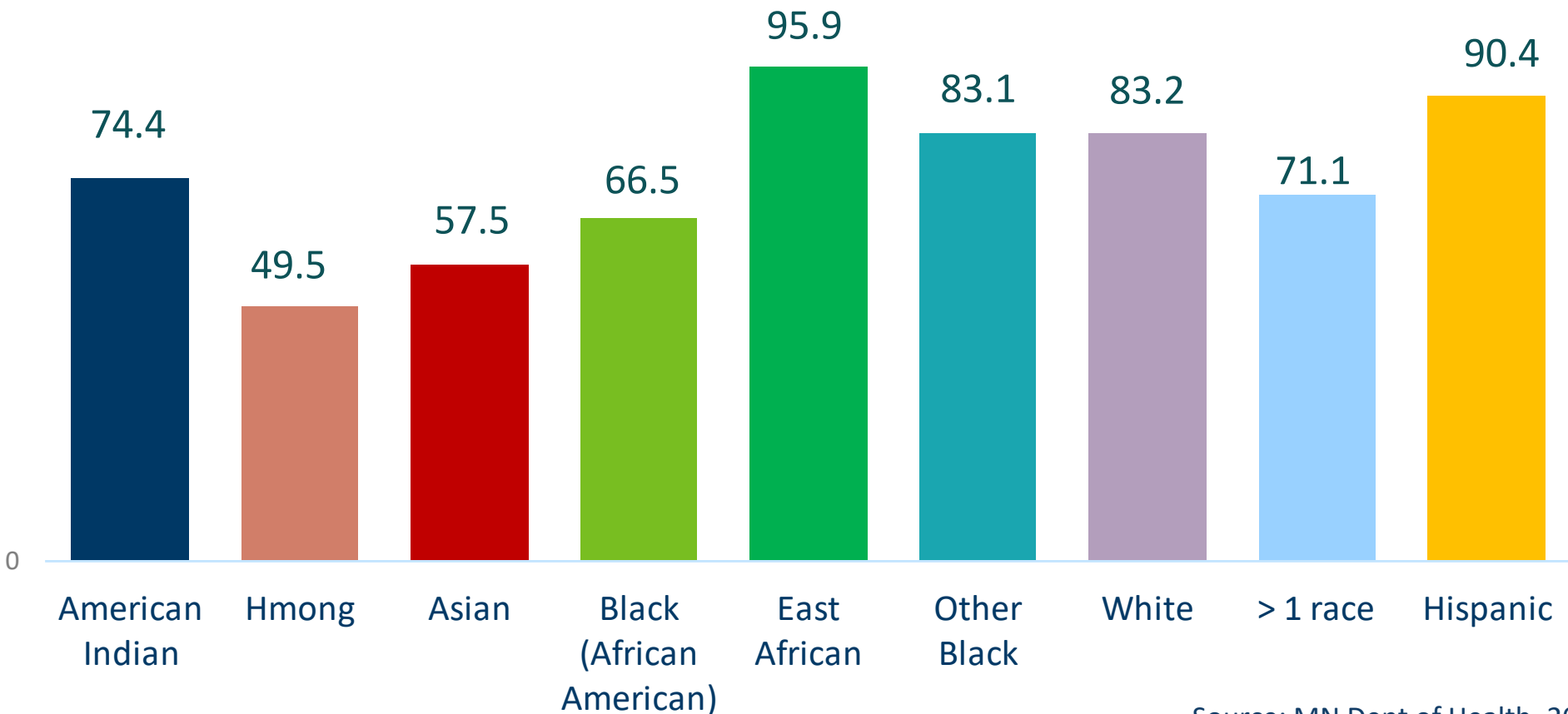
- Includes broad Minneapolis area (excluding Bloomington, Edina, Richfield)
- Served 28,185 WIC participants in 2020



East African includes Somali, Kenyan, Oromo, Ethiopian and Sudanese



Hennepin County WIC Participants rates of breastfeeding initiation, 2020



Source: MN Dept of Health, 2021

East African includes Somali, Kenyan, Oromo, Ethiopian and Sudanese



AHEAD project goals

- Increase number of peer counselors meeting the educational requirements needed to apply for lactation clinical internship
- Contribute to development of a Pathway 2 for advancing Black, Indigenous, and People of Color lactation professionals in Minnesota
- Inform and engage Hennepin County Public Health leadership who can provide expertise and take forward lessons learned from grant to enrich future models of equity and inclusion

“... researchers have documented differences in the diagnosis and treatment of patients based on race and provided consistent evidence that healthcare providers may exhibit conscious and unconscious racial bias affecting the service patients receive. These discriminatory practices have been linked to racial health disparities.”

Source: Thomas, 2018

Why have a diverse workforce?

- Health care and public health providers from the same background or culture can make a difference in participant health outcomes (IOM, 2003)
- Nationwide, approximately 2% of lactation consultants are BIPOC (USLCA, 2019)

Choosing the certification



- IBCLC certification is central to career advancement within WIC peer program and towards peers' personal goals
- Certification process has many barriers for those not from the dominant culture
- IBCLC exam preparation provides access to the standard, but flexibility to do less or customize the process

Lactation professions

International Board Certified Lactation Consultant
Advanced Lactation Consultant
Advanced Nurse Lactation Consultant

Certified Breastfeeding Specialist
Certified Lactation Counselor
Certified Lactation Educator

Peer Counselor

Breastfeeding Educator

Lactation Support Provider (LSP) Descriptors

Category	Descriptions	Training	Credentials & Programs
Lactation Consultants	Referral to these health professionals is appropriate for the full range of breastfeeding care, particularly involving high acuity breastfeeding situations.	90-95 didactic hours, and additional training requirements and exam for each title. Often work clinically as part of the healthcare team in both inpatient and outpatient settings; may also work in private practice.	International Board Certified Lactation Consultant® (IBCLC®) Program accreditation by Nat'l Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health professionals and individuals with 14 college level health science courses (6 can be continuing education) 95 lactation-specific didactic hours 300 to 1000+ hours of clinical practice, depending on pathway Advanced Lactation Consultants (ALC®) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification as a CLC® or IBCLC® Plus 2 college credits in <i>Maternal and Infant Assessment</i> and 3 college credits in <i>Advanced Issues in Lactation Practice</i> Advanced Nurse Lactation Consultants (ANLC®) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current RN license and certification as a CLC® or IBCLC® Plus 3 college credits in <i>Advanced Issues in Lactation Practice</i>
Breastfeeding Counselors	Individuals who hold these certifications or similar have the skills to provide breastfeeding counseling, address normal breastfeeding in healthy term infants, and to conduct maternal and infant assessments of anatomy, latch, and positioning, while providing support.	45-54.5 hours of classroom training and exam. Often provide support to families in the hospital and community settings. Counselors may have additional competencies to assist families with breastfeeding difficulties.	Certified Breastfeeding Specialists (CBS®) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 54.5 didactic hours earning 3 college credits Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC®) Program accreditation by American Nat'l Standards Institute (ANSI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 52 didactic hours; ANSI accredited exam earning 3 college credits Certified Lactation Educators (CLE®) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 didactic hours and exam
Breastfeeding Peer Counselors	Breastfeeding peer support organizations equip these LSPs to meet the needs of the families they serve, focusing primarily on individual and community support.	Personal breastfeeding experience and approximately 20 hours of training through various community models, except for the La Leche League Leader program, which has 90 hours of training.	Peer support organizations equip these LSPs to meet the needs of the families they serve, focusing primarily on individual and community support. Examples of national breastfeeding peer counselor organizations in the U.S. include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breastfeeding USA HealthConnect One La Leche League (LLL) Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE) Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
Lactation Educators	A Breastfeeding Educator is qualified to support and educate the public on breastfeeding and related issues but does not perform clinical care.	Generally, 20 hours of training.	Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association (CAPP)

This resource is supported by Cooperative Agreement Number, 6 NU380T000167-05-03, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its content are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC or the Department of Health and Human Services. The American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Family Physicians, and the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee - affiliated [Lactation Support Provider \(LSP\) Constellation](#), support this document as an educational tool, August 2021.

Source: USBC, 2021

Pathway choices to IBCLC credential

Source: Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition



Pathway 1

You are currently a health professional

This pathway is for you if you are already a practicing health professional.

Requirements:

- Complete Health Science courses
- Approved clinical lactation site
- Approved IBCLC mentor
- Complete 90hrs lactation education
- Complete 5hrs communication education
- Complete 1,000 clinical lactation mentored hours at this location
- Take the IBCLC exam with passing score
- Renew certification every 5 yrs

Pathways to IBCLC

An IBCLC is an International Board Certified Lactation Counselor. There are 14 required Health Science courses, required lactation specific education and training hours, and clinical lactation hours to complete before taking the exam to become an IBCLC.

There are 3 pathways the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners have created for obtaining an IBCLC. Hours cannot be fulfilled across paths. See each below for the requirements.

Pathway 2

You want to do Academic-based lactation education

Requirements:

- Complete an academic program in lactation counseling
- Complete 90hrs lactation education
- Complete 5hrs communication education
- Mentorship site approved for clinical hours
- Mentorship by an IBCLC for 300 clinical lactation hours
- Pass IBCLC exam
- Renew certification every 5 yrs



Pathway 3

You are done with the required Health Sciences coursework

Requirements:

- Proof of completion of all Health Science coursework
- Apply for pre-approval of 500hr plan
- Approved IBCLC mentor
- Approved clinical lactation site
- Complete 90hrs lactation education
- Complete 5hrs communication education
- Complete 500hrs clinical lactation hrs with IBCLC mentor
- Pass IBCLC exam
- Renew certification every 5 yrs

Visit mn.breastfeedingcoalition.org/resources for more information

Created by Pearl Walker-Swaney for MBC, 2022

Pursuing the IBCLC credential - Pathway 3

14

College-level
courses

Coursework

- College-level classes in specific subjects
- Many can be accessed online, via on demand courses with a monthly membership fee
- Several only available at local colleges

95

Hours lactation
training

Lactation training

- 95 hours of lactation specific training
- Many WIC peers can access 45-hour training programs through WIC
- The rest of the lactation training can be accessed through online programs

500

Mentored
hours

Internship

- The number of hours depend on the process by which the candidate pursues the credential
- These candidates needed 500 supervised hours, unpaid, at a hospital, clinic, or community site

Exam

- All candidates must apply and prepare for the international board exam

Activity 1

Candidate selection

7 AHEAD grant peer counselors

Multigenerational African American	4 (57%)
Asian	1 (29%)
Hispanic	2 (14%)



Activity 2

Hire a grant manager

- Important to have capacity to take on added project
- Hired senior planning analyst to manage grant
 - Budgeted at nine hours per week for 32 weeks
 - Salary & fringe = 29.7% total budget

Activity 3

Conduct individual needs assessments



Education goals

- Future medical degree?
- Community lactation?



Past health science coursework that fulfils education requirements

- Review transcripts
- Determine coursework meets IBLCE requirements
- Develop chart of coursework needed and proposed timeline



Past lactation education

- Needs to be within last five years when sitting exam
- Develop chart of coursework needed and proposed timeline
- Identify gaps in lactation and identify appropriate coursework

Feelings upon entering the cohort

a lot of red tape
no navigation **frustrating**
process should be clear *it takes a long time*
Process is daunting
ridiculous process **confusing**
can't do it by myself
having time and money to "try" is a luxury
time **An adventure**
there is a high need for self-advocacy in the process **it isn't clear what you need**
Problems are in the entire process

Peer Stacie

“When I was attending Brown College in 2004, I was taking a few medical classes. Years later the school was going in bankruptcy and I had a hard time getting credits transferred over. I had to retake all of my classes over again.”



Activity 4:

Identify and enroll in coursework

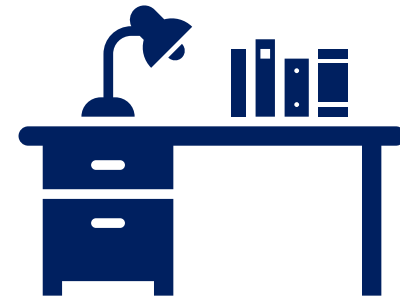
- Research online and in-person coursework options and enrollment deadlines at accredited institutions
- Enroll peers in courses
 - Tuition
 - Textbooks
- Coursework + textbooks = 35% of budget

Courses completed

Health science

14 required courses: Biology, Anatomy, Physiology, Infant Development, Clinical Research/Statistics, Nutrition, Psychology, Sociology, Medical Documentation, Medical Terminology, Occupational Safety, Ethics, Universal Precautions, Life Support

- Courses completed prior to grant: 16
- Courses completed during grant: 32



Lactation education

95 hours required within 5 years of sitting for the IBCLC exam

- Hours completed prior to grant: 265
- Hours completed during grant: 400

Activity 5

Coordinate clinical internships at local hospital and explore other internship opportunities

- Relationship established with Hennepin Healthcare – clinical lactation internships available through third party for a fee.
- Grant funds paid for the third-party Lactation Education Resources fee and associated fees
- Worked with another hospital interested in providing clinical lactation internships without a third party

Activity 6

Hold individual and group meetings

Individual

Peer + project manager or peer supervisor

Small Group

7 Hennepin County peers + project manager

Large Cohort

Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition scholarship recipients
+ Hennepin County peers + Ramsey County peers
+ MBC coalition leadership + stakeholders

Lessons learned



Lesson 1 Small wins

Slowly build
confidence and
personal agency

Take the time to
celebrate
successes and
each other

Confidence is
contagious

Peer Zabbie

“For me, I didn’t have any educational experience. I started out 100% brand new, had no classes accomplished [prior to grant]. It was amazing that I was able to get as much done as I did. My plan initially was to get all the health science classes done under the grant.”



Peer Rocio

"[because of the grant] I could understand all the process, all the courses, that was wonderful, and the [the coordinators] checking on us was wonderful.

Sometimes you get lost in life and you need that little push."



Lesson 2

Cohort model

Cohort model extended to study groups, internships, and Next Gen Lactation

Peers all pursued the same certification, but each had different needs, starting point, and timeline

Project allowed for a half-time contracted planning analyst who knew the certification process to provide broader oversight

Peer Sierra

“The support group with myself and [another peer] made it possible to work alongside somebody who already knew what Statistics was about, because that was my last class and I had dreaded taking it for a very long time. But it made it so much easier once I had someone willing to walk alongside us and keep us motivated.”

Hennepin County



Lesson 3 Organizational commitment

Peers deserve an opportunity
for advancement

A relatively small amount of
funding can go a long way

Administrative buy-in and
support instrumental in success

Lesson 4 Participant ownership

Participants had opportunities to design the program so real barriers could be identified

Feedback during the application process resulted in a redesign:

- More candidates
- Longer timeline for completing requirements

Shared resources are developed

- Complex credentialing programs increase confusion
- Participants helped create flowcharts and guidance documents for future candidates (available on [Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition website](#))



Lesson 4 Participant ownership cont'd

Those with privilege who design programs may miss some barriers

- Reimbursement programs disfavor those living in the wealth gap
- Lack of reliable transportation means less mobility and flexibility
- Parents of young children need flexible schedules
- A struggle to juggle part-time or full-time jobs while taking classes, working an unpaid internship

Honest, meaningful discussions occur

Lesson 5 Community partners

Colleges and online education programs

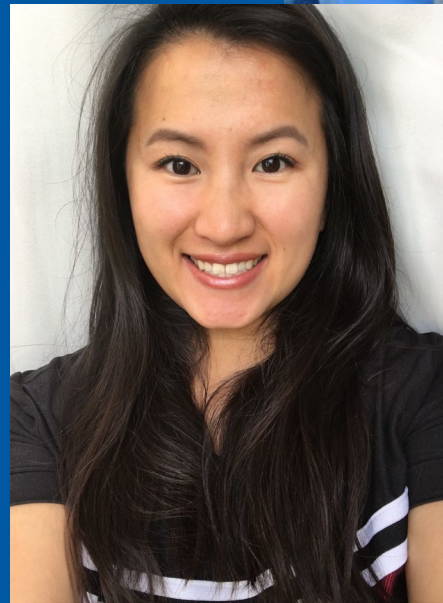
Seasoned IBCLCs

Hospitals and clinics

Local university

State breastfeeding coalition

Where we are now



Hennepin County AHEAD grant peers

- 4 peers working on clinical internship
- 1 peer poised to start internship
- 2 peers continue with their education

Where we are now – clinical feedback

“I have learned so much from them, truthfully, and enjoyed their openness, enthusiasm and patience. I can’t wait for them to become fully certified because they will serve our families so well. I really really hope that this program continues and we have many more opportunities to work with other aspiring lactation consultants!” –Hennepin Healthcare IBCLC

“[The peer] has jumped right in and is already sharing her wealth of knowledge with our patients and US!! We quickly realized that the experience and confidence [she] has from working with families for years makes her such an asset to our team. We are really excited to see her grow and to help us grow.” –Methodist Hospital IBCLC

Where we
want to be



Next Gen Lactation
Fostering a diverse lactation
workforce in Minnesota

MBC Next Gen Lactation

- Currently supports 10 – 15 IBCLC candidates from 3 pilot projects
 - Statewide recipients of MBC Improving Equity in Lactation Support scholarships
 - Hennepin County AHEAD grant peers
 - Ramsey County peers through Bigelow grant
- Aligns with MBC mission: Working collaboratively to create environments where breastfeeding is valued and supported to achieve natural infant feeding equity in all Minnesota communities
- Hiring part-time Next Gen Lactation coordinator

MBC Next Gen Lactation

- Seeking additional funding opportunities for current and future Next Gen participants
- Foster the development of internship sites and mentors throughout Minnesota
 - Explore DEI funds to offer paid internships
 - Change hiring practices to hire non-RN IBCLCs
- Continue to explore Pathway 2 program in Minnesota

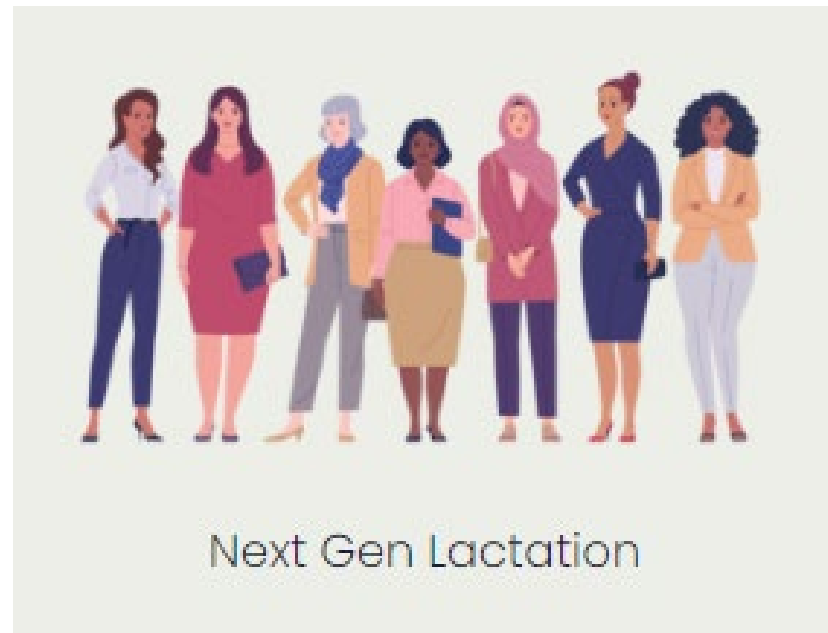
Next Gen Lactation subcommittee

- Linda Dech
- Eryn Ekegren
- Tipper Gallagher
- Barb King
- Steph Lacey
- Marcia McCoy
- Alison Schaub
- Kim Welvaert

Next Gen Lactation – MBC website

[Professionals – Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition \(mnbreastfeedingcoalition.org\)](https://mnbreastfeedingcoalition.org)

Scroll to





“It shouldn’t always have to be that we have these conversations about diversity and inclusion. It should be that that is the normal thing. I am glad that we do talk about it, but it’s like it also boxes us into these things and I feel like as a whole and as a worldwide thing, that we need to change that, because it makes it feel separating still. I am thankful for the opportunities, but it makes it always challenging that it is like a separate thing and that it’s not something that is at the forefront or equal to begin with.” - Peer Sierra

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Questions?

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