



2020 Alaska Breastfeeding Report



Human milk feeding is a proven primary prevention strategy, building a foundation for life-long health and wellness for infants and parents.

Alaska Breastfeeding Rates

See how Alaska breastfeeding rates and other measures compare to national rates and targets set by the Healthy People 2020 (HP2020) initiative.

	Breastfeeding Initiation Rate	Largest Disparity Between Racial/Ethnic Groups
Alaska	92.9%	20.2%
U.S. National	84.1%	16.7%
HP2020 Target	81.9%	N/A

Source: [National Vital Statistics System birth certificate data](#), a census of all 2019 births and the largest collection of breastfeeding data. Breastfeeding initiation is measured as a percentage. Largest disparity in breastfeeding initiation between racial/ethnic groups is measured as a percentage difference.

	Exclusive Breastfeeding at 6 Months	Any Breastfeeding at 12 Months	Formula Supplementation at 2 Days	mPINC Score
Alaska	35.3%	43.9%	12.4%	83
U.S. National	25.6%	35.3%	19.2%	79
HP2020 Target	25.5%	34.1%	14.2%	N/A

Source: [CDC Breastfeeding Report Card](#), a biannual publication highlighting progress towards breastfeeding goals in the United States. Breastfeeding and supplementation rates are measured as a percentage. CDC's national Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey assesses maternity care practices that affect how babies are fed.

WIC Program Breastfeeding Performance Measures

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five. The WIC program serves approximately 53 percent of all infants born in the United States.

	Fully Breastfed Rate	Partially Breastfed Rate	Total Breastfed Rate	Fully Formula Fed Rate
Alaska WIC Rates	24.4%	21.9%	46.3%	53.7%
National WIC Rates	12.1%	21.9%	33.9%	66.1%

Source: [Fiscal Year 2020 WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Report](#). Breastfeeding and formula feeding rates are measured as a percentage of participating children under one year of age.

Federally Funded Lactation Projects in Alaska During 2020

Each year funding is allocated to a variety of federally funded programs that include infant feeding support through the federal appropriations process.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- The **[CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program](#)** provides critical support to advance breastfeeding continuity of care and increase access to lactation-friendly environments in states, hospitals, and communities. In Fiscal Year 2020, this program was funded at \$9 million.
- **[Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health](#)** (REACH) funding is used to reduce health disparities among racial and ethnic populations with the highest burden of chronic disease through culturally tailored interventions to address preventable risk behaviors. As part of the REACH program, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and its partners support regional tribal health organizations. Together they assess nutrition standards in their regions, improve food procurement, train community health workers in breastfeeding support, promote existing chronic disease prevention programs, and expand existing tobacco control interventions.
- The **[State Physical Activity and Nutrition](#)** (SPAN) program funds recipients to implement evidence-based strategies at state and local levels to improve nutrition and physical activity. As part of the SPAN program, Alaska is implementing statewide and local-level interventions supporting mothers who breastfeed at the clinical and community level as well as in the workplace.
- With funding from the CDC, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials awarded **[innovation grants to support SPAN recipients](#)** to implement innovative projects that advance breastfeeding initiatives and health equity. In Alaska, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) implemented a program focused on developing long-term breastfeeding support for socio-economically marginalized (SEM) mothers and their families in the Greater Fairbanks area before and after delivery. To improve services, FMH established an advisory committee consisting of mothers with infants in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), a lactation specialist, a maternal-infant health nurse, and a pediatric staff member. FMH also established a New Parent Clinic staffed by International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs), which led to 20% increase in the number of patient appointments in the FMH lactation services program.
- **[Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country](#)** (GHWIC) is the CDC's largest investment to improve American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) tribal health and is focused on health promotion and chronic disease prevention, including increase breastfeeding rates. In Alaska, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Inc. and the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska received support through the GHWIC program.

Breastfeeding Coalitions Serving in Alaska

The USBC supports an extensive network of state, tribal, territorial, local, and cultural breastfeeding coalitions working to create policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) interventions to better serve babies and families.

The following coalition serves in Alaska:

- Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition: www.alaskabreastfeeding.org