



2020 Arkansas Breastfeeding Report



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

Arkansas Breastfeeding Rates

See how Arkansas 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
Arkansas	73.7%	32.7%
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
Arkansas	19.4%	23.8%	14.1%	69
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
Arkansas WIC Rates	7.9%	6%	13.9%	86.1%
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 Arkansas 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 University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences is using a community-based participatory approach to engage members of the Hispanic and Marshallese communities to improve access to healthy foods, breastfeeding support, improve walking and bicycle-friendly trails and routes, and link the community to culturally-tailored health and preventive care services.
- 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, Arkansas is promoting continuity of care and community breastfeeding support by recruiting and partnering with family practice clinics, early childhood education centers, and developmental disability day centers.
- 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. The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) worked to improve breastfeeding policies and practices in early childhood education (ECE) centers and family medicine clinics serving breastfeeding mothers and infants in the Mississippi River Delta region. UAMS recruited ECE centers and family medicine clinics in medically underserved counties with low median incomes to complete assessments of breastfeeding policies and practices. Ultimately, the grantee provided trainings in supportive breastfeeding policies and practices to nine ECE centers and one family medicine clinic.

Health Resources & Service Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA, MCHB)

- The [**Title V Maternal and Child Health \(MCH\) Block Grant**](#) provides funding for states and jurisdictions to meet the unique health needs of their children and families. Arkansas has chosen increasing the percentage of infants who are ever breastfed and infants who are breastfed exclusively through 6 months as one of their Title V Maternal and Child Health grant National Performance Measures.
- The [**Children's Healthy Weight Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network \(CHW-CollIN\)**](#), coordinated by the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists, partners with and supports states in adopting evidence-based or evidence-informed policies and practices related to nutrition, physical activity, and breastfeeding. The Arkansas CollIN team sought to engage employers and communities in the state's southeast/Delta region on the procedures and policy changes necessary to support lactating women in the workforce. Through lactation accommodation training, breastfeeding employees could increase the duration and exclusivity of breastfeeding by having adequate space and time to pump, breastfeed, and store milk at their worksites. After an initial analysis, the team decided to focus their efforts exclusively on lactation accommodations in early childhood education centers (ECEs) within communities of color.
- The [**Healthy Start program**](#) strengthens the foundations at the community, state, and national levels to help women, infants, and families reach their fullest potential. The Healthy Start program implements community-based interventions to improve the health of mothers and children, including lactation education. In Arkansas, the University of Arkansas System was awarded a \$1,165,338 Healthy Start Grant in 2020.
- The [**Maternal Telehealth Access Project**](#) (MTAP) is a one-time project funded through the CARES Act to increase access to quality maternity care and services via telehealth during (and beyond) the COVID-19

pandemic. The project focuses specifically on serving women at greatest risk of maternal mortality and morbidity, including women of color, Black women, Native American women, Latinx women, and women who live in rural and frontier communities. The MTAP [Community Grant Program](#) was designed to increase access to perinatal services and supports via telehealth, including clinical care, care coordination, support, and doulas/community health workers. The project was coordinated by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC), in partnership with Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (ROSE) and the National Birth Equity Collaborative (NBEC). Through the MTAP program, the Arkansas Birthing Project received funding from ROSE to provide cell phones, data cards, and education to pregnant and postpartum women to support breastfeeding and doula services.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service

- Each year, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) presents the [WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence](#) to recognize local WIC agencies that have provided exemplary breastfeeding promotion and support activities. The following Arkansas agency was awarded:
- *WIC Breastfeeding Awards of Excellence Gold Award 2019: Arkansas WIC*

Breastfeeding Coalitions Serving in Arkansas

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 Arkansas:

- Arkansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.: www.arbfc.org/