

# Collaboratively Pursuing Policy Solutions: Lessons Learned from U.S. Breastfeeding Committee



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*We have no financial ties or conflicts of interest to disclose.*



Photo credit: Ambreen Hasan

# Celebration – PUMP Act is law

Thanks to  
Thousands  
Millions are  
served



# Four Corners for Foundational Change





# More to follow soon

- Passing a law is only the first step
- Update basic information
- DoL regulatory guidance
- Tools for implementation
- Support employers & families
- Bridge intent of law and lived experience of families



Photo credit: Minnie Zhou

# Why Focus on Policy, Systems & Environmental Change?

Recognize  
no one is  
an island



# We all make decisions within layers of context

- Family & cultural → **tradition and comfort**
- Health care practices → **access to care**
- Community → **norms and resources**
- Workplace support → **time and money**
- Laws and policies → **fairness and justice**
- Marketing, media → **influence/influencers**



## The contexts are further layered in systems

- Real-life experiences are defined by intangibles like policies and environments
- Social Determinants of Health
  - Social and community context
  - Neighborhood and built environment
  - Economic stability
  - Education access and quality
  - Health Care access and quality

# USBC: Focus on policy & systems

- Breastfeeding initiation and duration are a measure of equity and community health.
- **Achieving one's breastfeeding goals is not solely up to the individual or their will/capacity**
- Breastfeeding rates indicate larger systemic health and how much support or resource is available
- Hence the USBC focus on policy and systems

USBC forms collaborative groups called “Constellations” to hold this work





**Our topic is breastfeeding, and the Ultimate Version of our Ultimate Vision is liberation.**

- **Serve & uplift those most impacted by inequitable policies & structures**
  - Take care for who is at the table
  - Co-create intentional dynamics for the group
  - Guide shared learning journeys & conduct root cause analysis
  - Priority strategy selection by the Constellation (not funder)



# Collaborative Approach

## *Collective Work, Cumulative Impact*

# Key Components of Collective Impact

| Collective Impact 1.0 by Kania & Kramer (2011) | Collective Impact 3.0 by Tamarack (2016) |
|--|--|
| <b>Leadership Paradigm</b>                     |  |
| Management                                     | Movement Building                        |
| <b>Five Conditions of Collective Impact</b>    |  |
| Continuous Communication                       | Inclusive Community Engagement           |
| Shared Measurement                             | Strategic Learning                       |
| Mutually Reinforcing Activities                | High Leverage Activities                 |
| Common Agenda                                  | Community Aspiration                     |
| Backbone                                       | Containers for Change                    |

Achieve  
system change  
through  
**Inclusive  
Community  
Engagement**





# Bring stakeholders together

- At every scale, grassroots to treetops...
- **Bringing stakeholders together requires a head, hearts, and hands approach**

A vibrant, multi-colored quilted sign with the text "You belong." in a white, rounded font with a blue outline. The sign is set against a background of lush green foliage, including various leafy plants and small white flowers. The quilt pattern consists of many small triangles in various colors like red, blue, green, yellow, and purple.

You  
belong.

## Establish an intentionally inclusive culture

- Diversity
- Equity
- Inclusion
- Belonging
- Liberation

“Who is at the table changes the conversation”

~Dr. Mama Kimarie Bugg



# Co-create group agreements

- Start minimalist and build over time or as needed
- Include both conduct and values
  - “Wait for all to speak the first time before speaking the second time.”
  - “We will center those most impacted.”
- Check-in each meeting
- Get buy-in

What's  
personal  
growth  
have to do with  
collective  
change?





**“Do not be afraid to be transformed  
by that which is difficult”**

~Lactation Support Provider  
Constellation Group Agreement

**Everyone wants to transform,  
but nobody wants to change.**

Frederica Mathewes-Green



## Build capacity to go deep

- Not all topics require depth
- But if we're speaking courageously
- And working on topics that impact communities
- We may need to go deep sometimes

**“The most pressing need of our times is to level up our capacity to navigate difference”**

~Dr. John Carter, OSD



# Move at the speed of trust

## Signs of trust:

1. Capacity to give the benefit of the doubt and ask for more information
2. Comfort voicing an unpopular or dissenting view

# Reflections

- **Inclusive Community Engagement:**
  - What was evoked or provoked for you?
  - What is something you recognized your organization is doing well?
  - If you see an opportunity for personal growth? Can you name that edge for yourself?



Generate  
a landscape  
view through  
**Strategic  
Learning**



Photo credit: Bailey Zindel



## Explore what is urgent or emergent

- What are stakeholders doing on this topic?
- What brings them?
- What are key developments or updates on the topic?
- Are there new resources that exist or are tools needed?
- What concerns does the group have?



# Explore root causes and impacts

- Conduct a root cause analysis
- Explore issues at the roots
- Who is most marginalized by the problem?
- Who is doing well despite the problem?
- Which institutions & policies impact the problem?
- What do we know about the history of the problem to address present inequities?

# Identify High Leverage Activities



Photo credit: Florian Olivo



## Identify mechanisms of policy change

- Position statements
- Organizational policies
- City ordinances
- Implementation advisory groups
- Public comments
- Legislation and law
- Regulation and implementation



# Research upstream impacts

- Policy mechanisms are often obscure
- Take time to research “what makes what”
- Learn together how something works
- Discern together what something means
- Track responses to build shared understanding



# Surface organizational capacity

- As policy mechanisms are emerging
- And group understanding is building
- Assess real organizational capacity
- *Note: those most impacted by an issue might have the least capacity to work on it*

# Reflections

- **Strategic Learning:**
  - Notice the difference in your body between **urgent issues** and **root causes**
  - Is there a difference in the stance or speed?
  - How might that difference change your approach?
- **High Leverage Activities:**
  - Given limitations in capacity, how does the search for high-leverage activities underscore the importance of research?



Select  
strategies  
that reflect  
**Community  
Aspiration**



Photo credit: Anna Kumpan



THIS IS  
THE SIGN  
YOU'VE BEEN  
LOOKING FOR

## Lead values to inform group priorities

- Inclusive tables
- Trust is present
- Shared understanding from learning journey
- Assessed capacity
- Learned to center those most impacted
- **PRIORITY STRATEGIES REFLECT COMMUNITY ASPIRATION**



## Pace for sustainability

- The bigger the lift the slower the going
- Build a strategy that can bring everyone along
- Space for each organization to contribute as fits for them



## Plan with Purpose

- Identify mutually reinforcing activities that fit each partner's capacity
- In a multi-sector collaborative, organizations will have different sweet spots
- In equity-centered work, there's support



# Reflect on the impact of activities

Stewards can ask participants:

- How effective was the learning journey in building shared understanding?
- Does the plan align with your organization?
- Are we realizing the shared vision?
- What is changed as a result of our efforts?

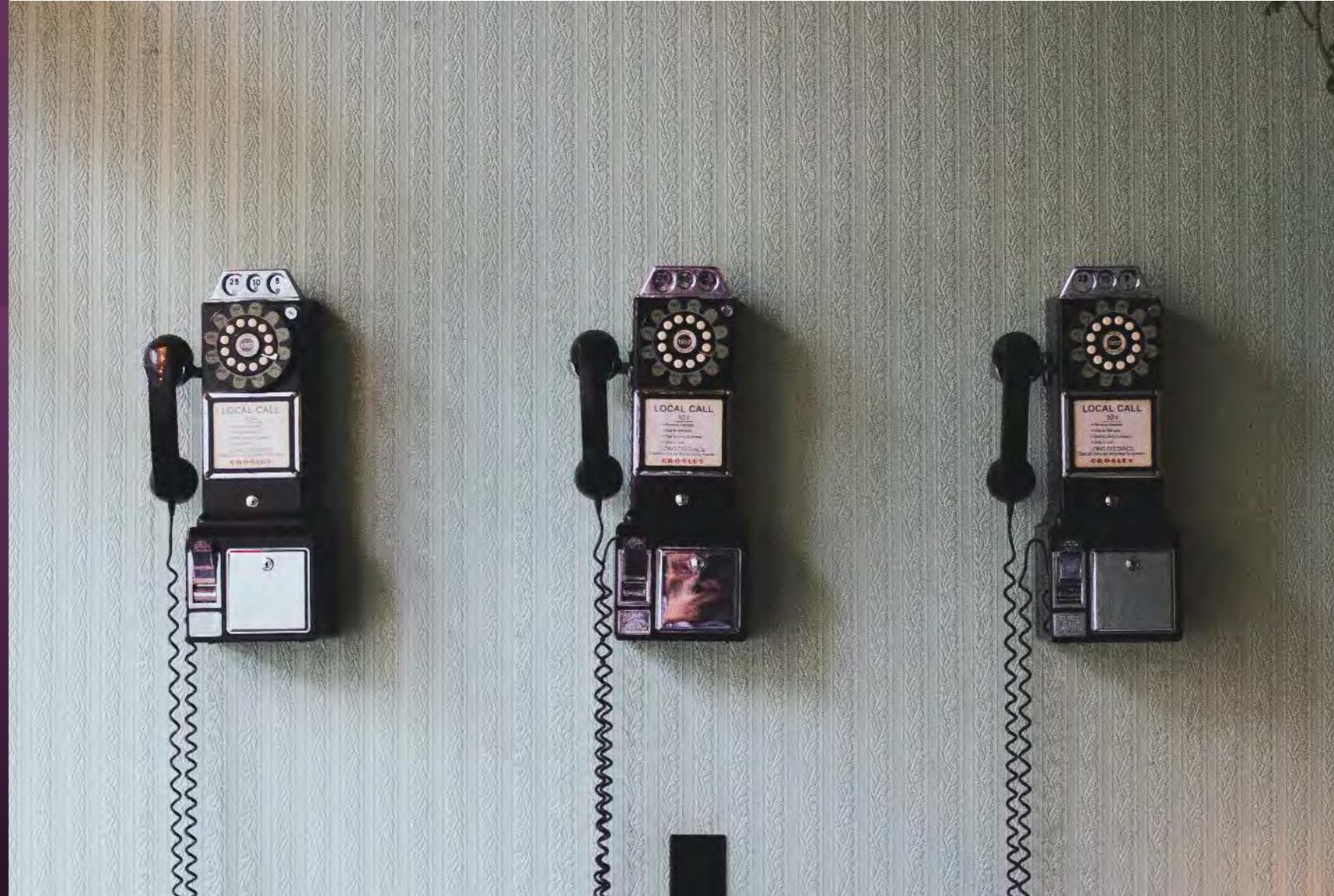


# Reflect on the depth of the collaboration

Stewards can ask participants:

- How valuable is this to you? To your organization?
- How comfortable are you? Is your organization?
- What kind of investments is your organization making?

Provide a  
framework that  
serves as a  
**Container for  
Change**





# Backbone Support

## Continuous communication:

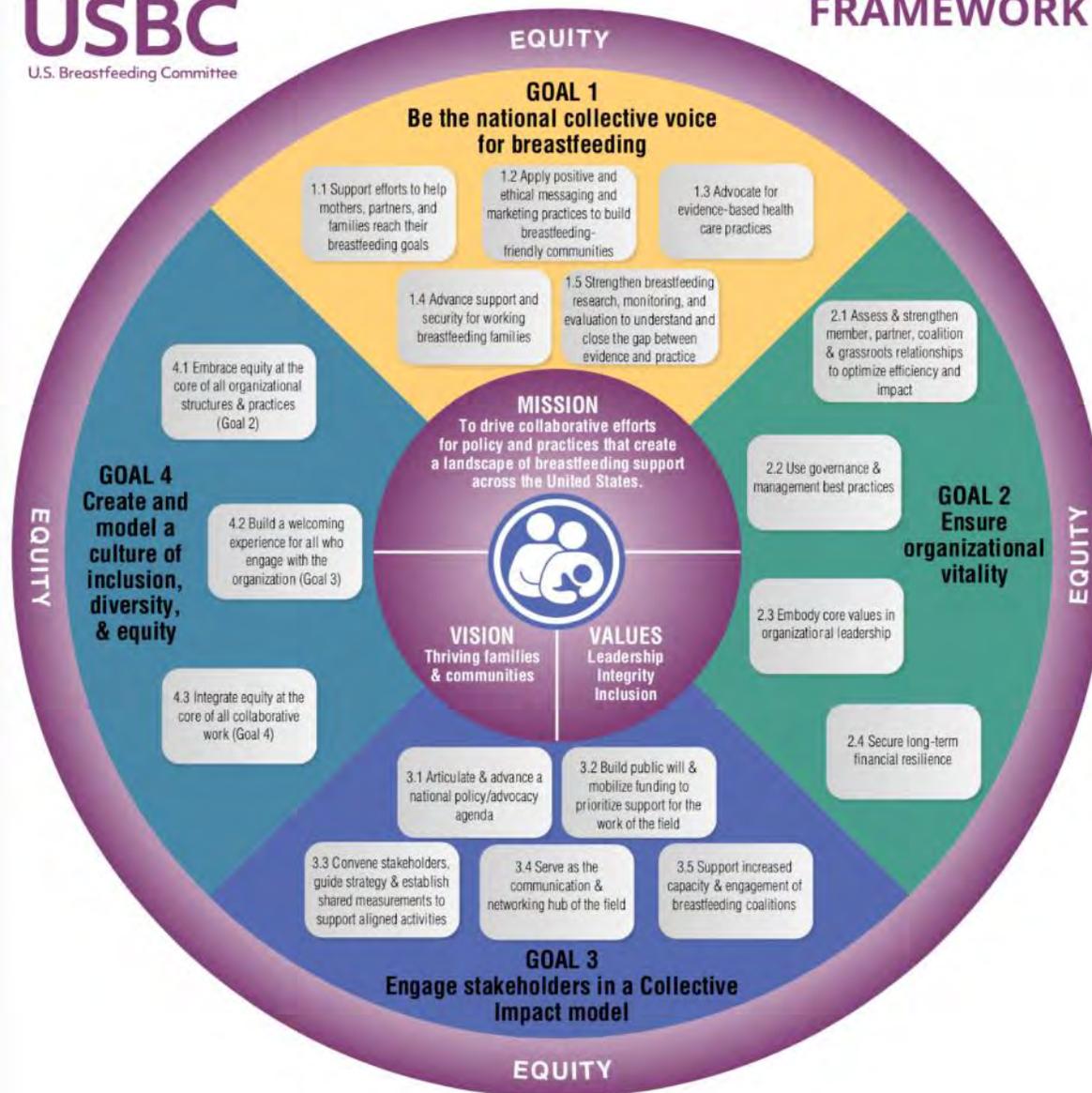
- Conscious Convening
- Equity-Informed Facilitation
- Research of landscape
- Mediation/negotiation
- Surveys of stakeholders

# USBC Strategic Framework



## Protecting, Promoting, and Supporting Breastfeeding: A Public Health Imperative

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



Collective Impact Framework | Constellation Formation Pathway

|   | Pre-Pathway Stage<br>NETWORKING  | Pathway Stage 1<br>INCUBATION CONVERSATION  | Pathway Stage 2<br>EMERGING CONSTELLATION  | Pathway Stage 3<br>ORGANIZING CONSTELLATION   | Pathway Stage 4<br>ACTIVE CONSTELLATION   |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Stakeholders</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations with interest in a topic, networking in various forums</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations interested in exploring the potential for collective action</li> <li>Facilitator trained to lift all voices, surface themes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations keen to select priority strategies for collective action</li> <li>Steward organization/s with the capacity to lead on the topic</li> <li>Backbone organization</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations ready to negotiate partnership agreements</li> <li>Steward organization/s</li> <li>Invited stakeholders as appropriate</li> <li>Backbone organization</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizations actively engaged in advancing priority strategies</li> <li>Steward organization/s</li> <li>Invited stakeholders</li> <li>Backbone organization in formalized role/s</li> </ul> |
| <b>Backbone Organization's Primary Role</b>         | Provide infrastructure to support connections  | Facilitate incubation conversation/s with skill   | Ensure equity approach throughout the process  | Support meeting design and facilitation   | Support promotion of Constellation's work   |
| <b>Engagement &amp; DEI Approach</b>                | Conversations may be informal yet must be approached with skill and care to navigate differences                       | Actively seek under-represented voices and perspectives; utilize tools, technologies, and approaches that maximize participation  | Intentionally build a mix of content & context experts; foster an environment of trust; select priority strategies through an equity lens  | Ensure all voices are heard and that conditions support the expression of divergent/ dissenting views; seek common ground to advance priority strategies  | Continuously assess inclusionary dynamics, intentionally evolve equity values and priorities  |
| <b>Primary Goals</b>                                | Share resources, landscape updates, and opportunities  | Surface current issues; evaluate urgency to act; balance expertise and experience; identify funded capacity to lead   | Articulate shared understanding of the problem, and equity and advocacy approaches   | Formalize group's working agreements: decision-making, conflict of interest, anticipated contributions of each partner  | Living the group's values, ongoing communication, implementing collaborative efforts, achieving shared aims   |
| <b>Evaluation &amp; Measurement</b>                 | n/a  | Assess interest and energy to move forward, advance or release expectations   | Scan/map landscape, gather baseline data   | Define success, establish shared metrics  | Collect, track, and report on shared metrics; evaluate progress   |
| <b>Contributions to the Field</b>                   | Connection, surfacing of resources and ideas   | Surfacing landscape updates   | Identifying priority strategies  | Organizing for impact, collective action opportunities  | White papers, policy advancements, intervention guides, etc.  |
| <b>Examples from USBC-affiliated Constellations</b> | Online Learning Communities, <a href="#">webinar learning series</a>   | Facilitated member organization incubation conversations  | Constellation online workspaces, and support for Steward/s   | Terms of Reference (agreements) for active Constellations   | <a href="#">Continuity of Care Blueprint</a> , <a href="#">Lactation Support Provider Descriptor Table</a>  |

# Key Components of Collective Impact (3.0 from Tamarack, presented USBC-style)



## Leadership Paradigm:

Distribute leadership to focus on leaderful movement building

## Five Conditions:

Inclusive Community Engagement

Strategic Learning

High Leverage Activities

Community Aspiration

(Backbone organizations as)  
Containers for Change

# Reflections

- **Community Aspiration:**
  - In what way is community trust essential to discovering and realizing community aspiration?
- **Containers for Change:**
  - Notice that minimalist structures still hold water



Photo credit: USGS



# United States Policy Landscape

# The 4 Pillars of Infant Nutrition Security in the U.S.



**PARENTS**

**PROGRAMS**

**POLICIES**

**PLAN**



**USBC**  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee

# Parents Pillar:

**Everyone who loves & cares for a child**

- The Parents pillar includes people of all races, genders, caregiving roles, routes to parenthood, immigration status, religious or political views, and **all infant feeding methods.**

**If you love and care for a child, you belong.**

# Programs Pillar:

## Federal programmatic funding

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - Maternity care practices, physician education, lactation support, capacity-building assistance, emergency response, workplace support, national monitoring and reporting
- Health Resources Service Administration
- National Institutes of Health
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service
- Food and Drug Administration
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
- Office of the Secretary

# Policies Pillar:

## Forward policies that would help



- National Paid Family Leave
- Nonprofit Donor Milk Bank Infrastructure
- Integration of IYCF-E practices, from community, state, to federal
- Regulate the commercial milk formula industry marketing practices

## Plan Pillar:

# Emergency Preparedness, Response, Resilience

- **Emergency Preparedness** includes a directory of LSPs, and a tracking system for resources such as formula
- **Emergency Response** includes trauma-informed care, LSPs in every community, access to supplies
- **Emergency Resilience** includes centering the needs of communities disproportionately impacted by disaster

# USBC Policy Priorities

## Policy Priorities for the 118th Congressional Session

Federal funding for  
breastfeeding



Infant nutrition security



Access to lactation support  
& supplies



Workplace protections



Maternity care





**WE HEAR YOU.**

## Policy Priority Selection by Survey

- The USBC Policy Priorities are selected:
  1. Broad stakeholder survey to generate topics of import
  2. A benefit of membership is selecting the priority strategies



# Breastfeeding Report, 2023



## State and Territorial Breastfeeding Reports



- Data on Breastfeeding Rates & Support Indicators
- Coalitions Serving in State/Territory
- Federally Funded Projects





## Other tools for consideration

- Coalition and member directories
- First Food Connection Hub
- Tools available to Constellation Stewards – at USBC or within membership
  - Root cause analysis template
  - Terms of Reference template
  - Constellation Pathway Record Template

# Reflections

- When you consider the USBC **Policy Priorities:**
  - What comes up for you as an area of excitement or alignment with your organization?
- When you consider the USBC **Tools:**
  - What are you most eager to use next in your collaborative work?





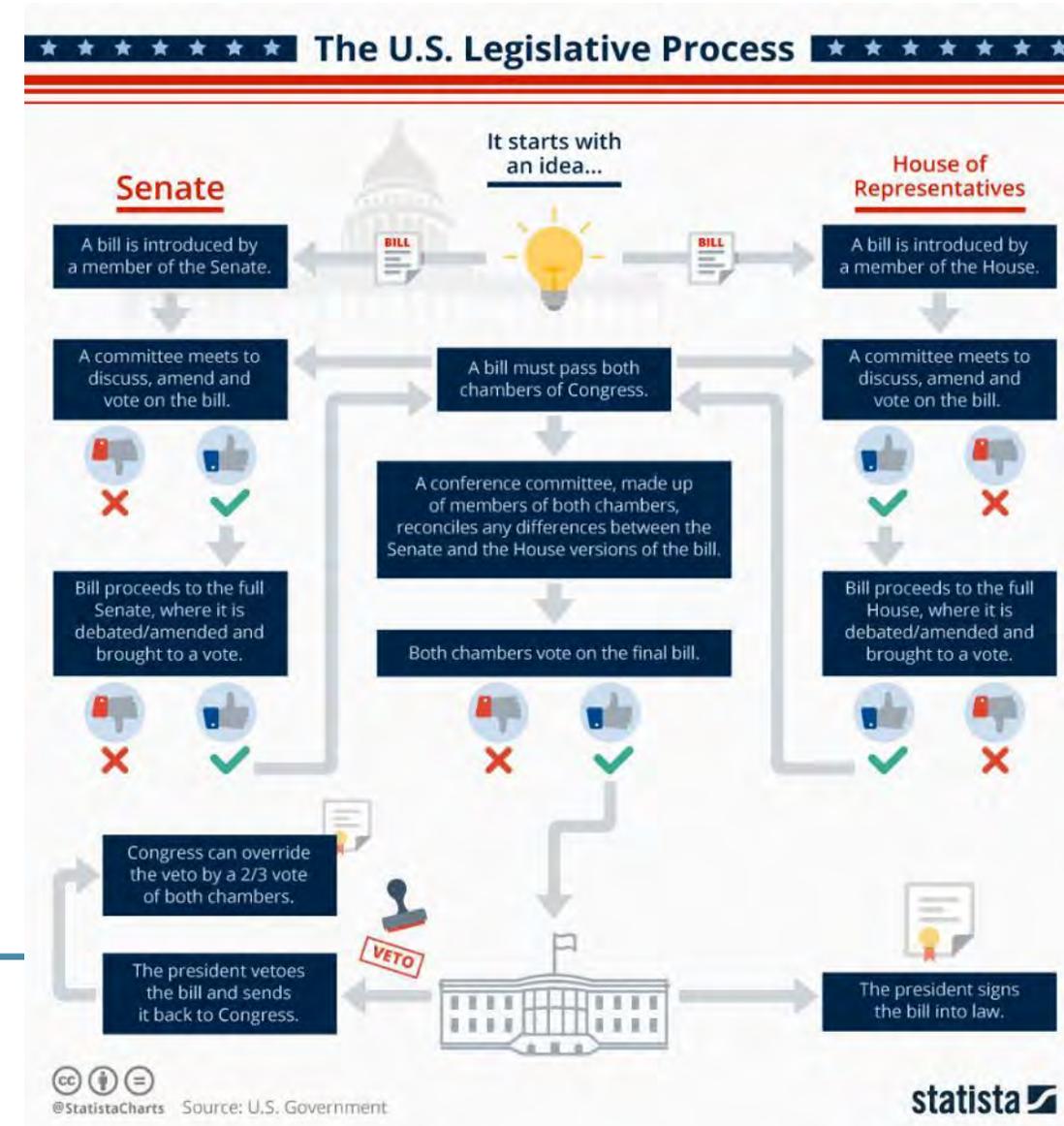
# Examples of Shared Aspiration Creating Policy Change

USBC  
Active  
Constellations



# Workplace Support & Paid Leave

- Levers for change:
  - **Publications:**
    - Creating a Culture to Support Breastfeeding Physicians and Medical Trainees
    - Resources for Parents
  - **Webinar series:** Breastfeeding Works
  - **Legislation:**
    - Building expert strategy legal group
    - Develop bill text and test it while building support
    - Educate policy makers while looking for champions and nay-sayers – will need both to build a strong bill
    - **NEVER GIVE UP UNTIL THE THING IS DONE!!!!**





# Lactation Support Providers

- Levers for change:
  - **Building a Beloved Community**
  - **Publications:**
    - LSP Descriptor Chart
    - LSP Training Directory
    - Payer Policy Guidance
  - **Public Comments:**
    - Women's Preventive Services Initiative
    - TRICARE Demonstration Project



## Statement on Pasteurized Donor Human Milk & COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, breastfeeding and use of pasteurized donor human milk (PDHM) are more important than ever for maternal and infant health. Breastfeeding helps build and strengthen infants' immune systems in addition to protecting them from numerous acute and chronic diseases and sudden infant death syndrome. Breastfeeding is also associated with numerous health benefits for mothers in the immediate postnatal period and across the life-course.

### Systemic Racial and Health Inequity and the Disproportionate Impact of COVID-19

Any considerations of COVID-19, infant feeding, and maternal health must take into account how existing structural and systemic racial and health inequities disproportionately affect Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Poor maternal and infant outcomes, such as maternal mortality and morbidity, preterm birth, and infant mortality, occur at unacceptably high rates in the United States, with Black families experiencing the highest burden. In addition, access to PDHM has historically been limited in BIPOC communities. This legacy of health inequities and oppressive social policies relates to the high rates of COVID-19 mortalities and infection impacting BIPOC communities now.

In the face of the pandemic, best practices for maternity and breastfeeding care have been evolving as new information about disease transmission emerges and public health guidance slowly aligns. There have been regrettable delays in this process compounded by a lack of national preparedness to address the maternal and child health implications of this serious respiratory virus. System failures in maternity care, including breastfeeding and lactation support, have been widely reported and these breakdowns disproportionately affect communities that were already suffering from long-standing inequities and health disparities.

# Pasteurized Donor Human Milk

- Levers for change:
  - **Statement:** PDHM & COVID-19
  - **Legislation:** Donor Milk Safety Act
  - **Organizational sign-on letter**

# Physician Education and Training on Breastfeeding Action Plan



## Physician Education & Training

- Levers for change:
  - **Publications:**
    - Culture Plan to Support Breastfeeding Physicians and Medical Trainees
    - Culture Plan Infographics
    - Physician Education and Training on Breastfeeding Action Plan
    - Physician's Role in Breastfeeding Support



Joint Statement  
Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (IYCF-E) in the U.S.

May 2022 | Context of Infant Formula Shortage & Ongoing Pandemic

The below signatories of the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee - Affiliated COVID-19 Infant & Young Child Feeding in Emergencies Constellation call for ALL involved in disaster relief and emergency response to equitably protect, promote, and support infant and young child food safety and security.

The active support and coordination between federal, state and local governments, the commercial milk formula industry, lactation support providers, and all other relevant actors involved in response to emergencies are critical to ensure optimal infant and young child feeding practices, which are necessary to healthy child growth and development and preventing malnutrition, illness, and death.

We are issuing this joint statement to secure immediate, coordinated, multi-sectoral action on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) in line with adopted IYCF guidance in the United States.

Children from birth up to two years are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition, illness, and death. Globally recommended IYCF practices protect the health and wellbeing of children and are especially relevant in emergencies. **Recommended practices**<sup>1</sup> include:

- 1) **Early initiation of breastfeeding** (within 1 hour of birth);
- 2) **Exclusive breastfeeding** for the first 6 months (no food or liquid other than human milk, not even water unless medically indicated);
- 3) Introduction of age-appropriate, safe and nutritionally adequate **complementary feeding** from 6 months of age; and
- 4) **Continued breastfeeding** for 2 years and beyond.

Particular concerns regarding **the negative impact of disasters and emergencies on infant and young child feeding during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond** include:

- **Deepening of structural inequities** among historically oppressed and marginalized groups, including Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and many immigrant and refugee populations, who are all disproportionately affected by systemic racism, obstetric violence, and maternal and infant morbidity and mortality. Pregnant and lactating populations, infants, and young children

# Infant & Young Child Feeding in Emergencies

- Levers for change:
  - **Story collector** of provider and family experiences
  - Participation in **courageous conversations** with policy makers
  - **Statement** on IYCF-E in context of COVID-19
  - **Updated Statement** on IYCF-E in the context of COVID-19 and the infant formula shortage

USBC  
Emerging  
Constellations



Photo credit: Lisha Riabinina

# Disrupting Formula Marketing

- Levers for change:
  - **Webinar series** to support the shared learning journey
  - **Incubation Conversations** to explore the need and capacity to form a constellation



The U.S. plays a large role in the global economy but has yet to adopt the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes*.



Formula marketing impacts the provision of lactation support to communities with diverse needs.



What opportunities for collective work are there to influence policy on commercial milk formula marketing?

# Get Involved

Overview

Current Public Comment Opportunities

Summaries of Past Public Comments

## Public Comments

There are numerous ways for the public to comment on measures under development, under consideration, or proposed for adoption, or other quality topics. The public can provide critical suggestions not previously considered by the measure developer or its [technical expert panel \(TEP\)](#), other multi-stakeholder groups, or CMS program.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Click the plus sign (+) for each question to learn more.

What is a public comment, and why should I get involved?



What to include in a public comment?



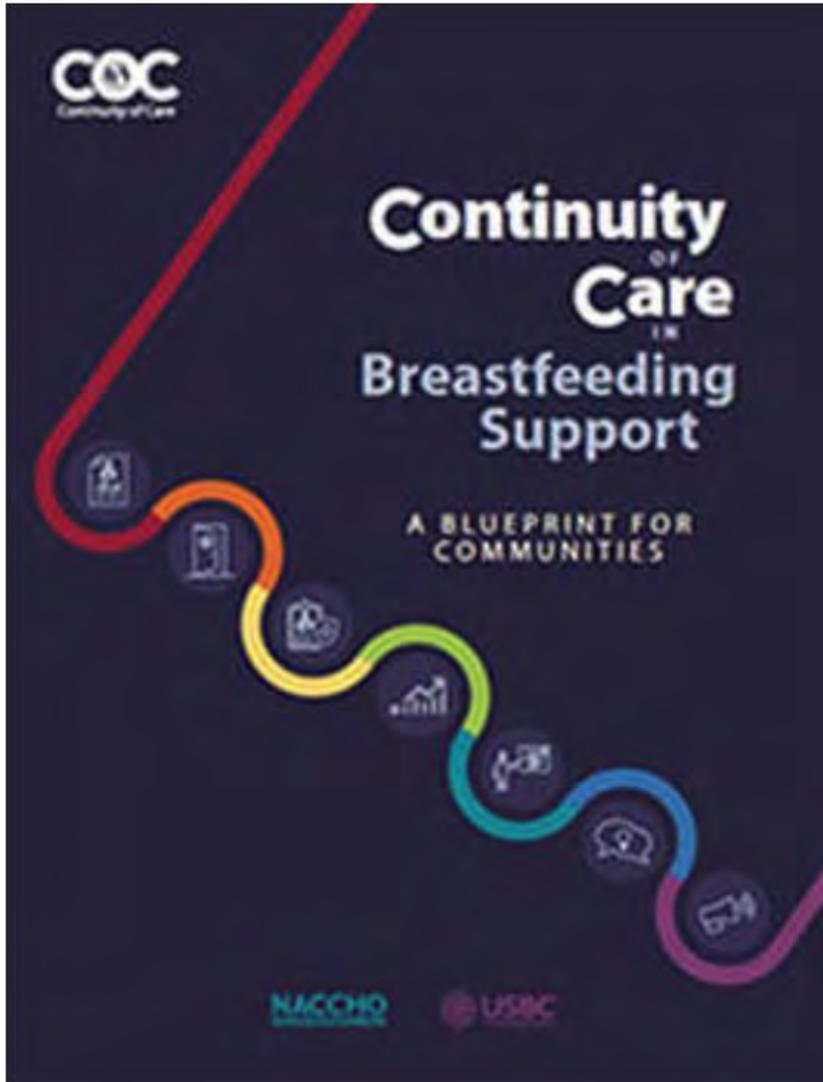
# Maternity Care Practices

- Levers for change:
  - **Group discernment:** CMS proposed policy public comment opportunity

USBC  
Resting  
Constellations



Photo credit: Janko Ferlic



# Continuity of Care

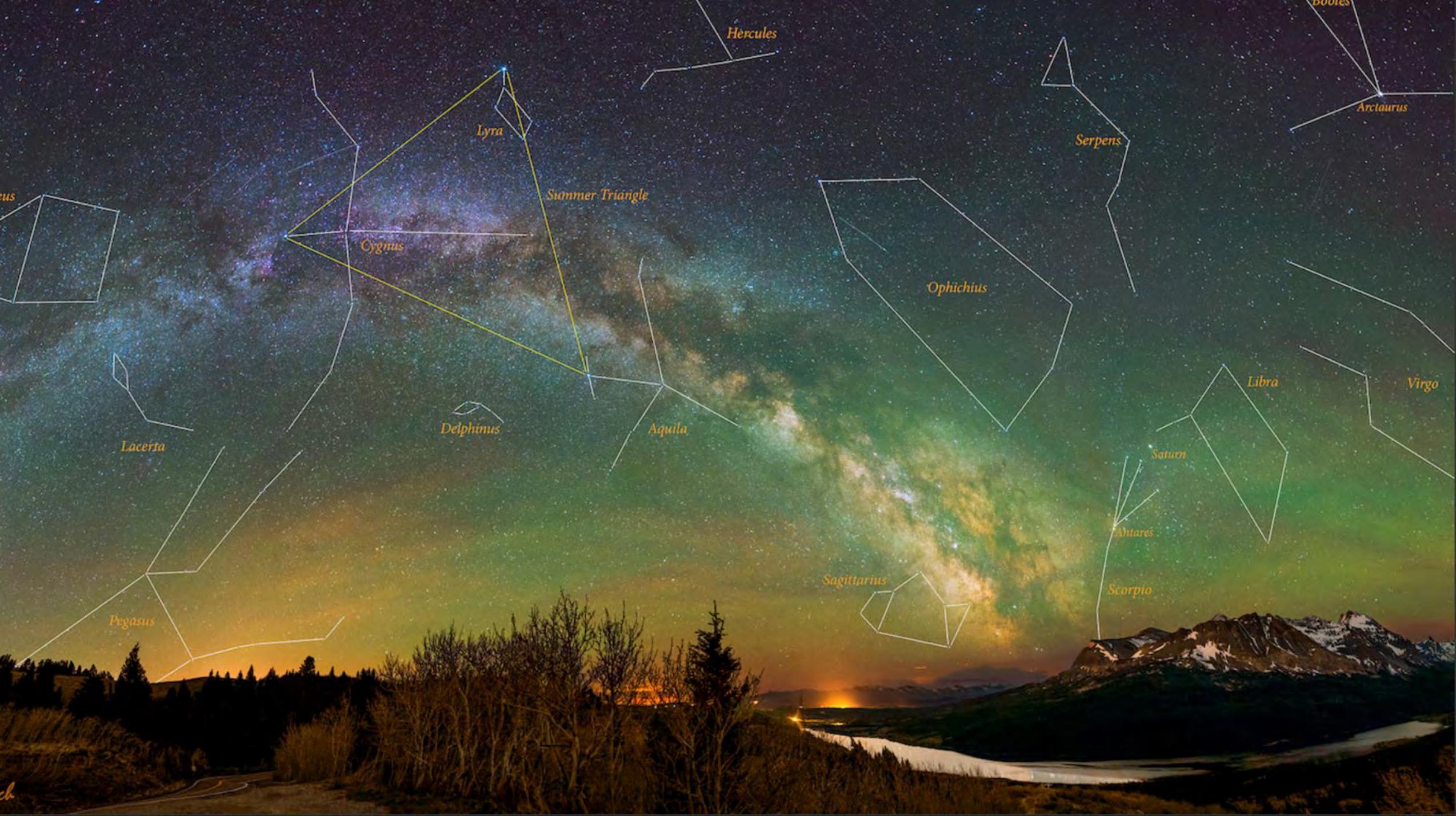
- Levers for change:
  - **Publication:**
    - Continuity of Care for Breastfeeding Support: A Blueprint for Communities

# Reflections

Given what you heard about  
**USBC's collective impact approach:**

- How is this similar and different to work you're doing in community?
- What could be gained by working with USBC member organizations?
- In what ways has your view of policy and legislation changed or expanded from this presentation?





Hercules

Boötes

Arctaurus

Serpens

Lyra

Summer Triangle

Cygnus

Ophiuchus

Libra

Virgo

Delphinus

Aquila

Lacerta

Saturn

Antares

Scorpio

Sagittarius

Pegasus