

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



Photo credit: Peter Vanosdall

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)
Leadership Paradigm	
Management	Movement Building
Five Conditions of Collective Impact	
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**

Photo credit: Rob Curran





Bring stakeholders together

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

A photograph of a vibrant, multi-colored quilted sign with the words "You belong." in a white, outlined, sans-serif font. The sign is set against a background of lush green foliage, including plants with variegated leaves and small white flowers. The quilted pattern consists of numerous 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?



Photo credit: Purnomo Capunk



**“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?



Photo credit: Luke Leung

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?



Photo credit: Luke Leung

Select
strategies
that reflect
**Community
Aspiration**

Photo credit: Anna Kumpan





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:

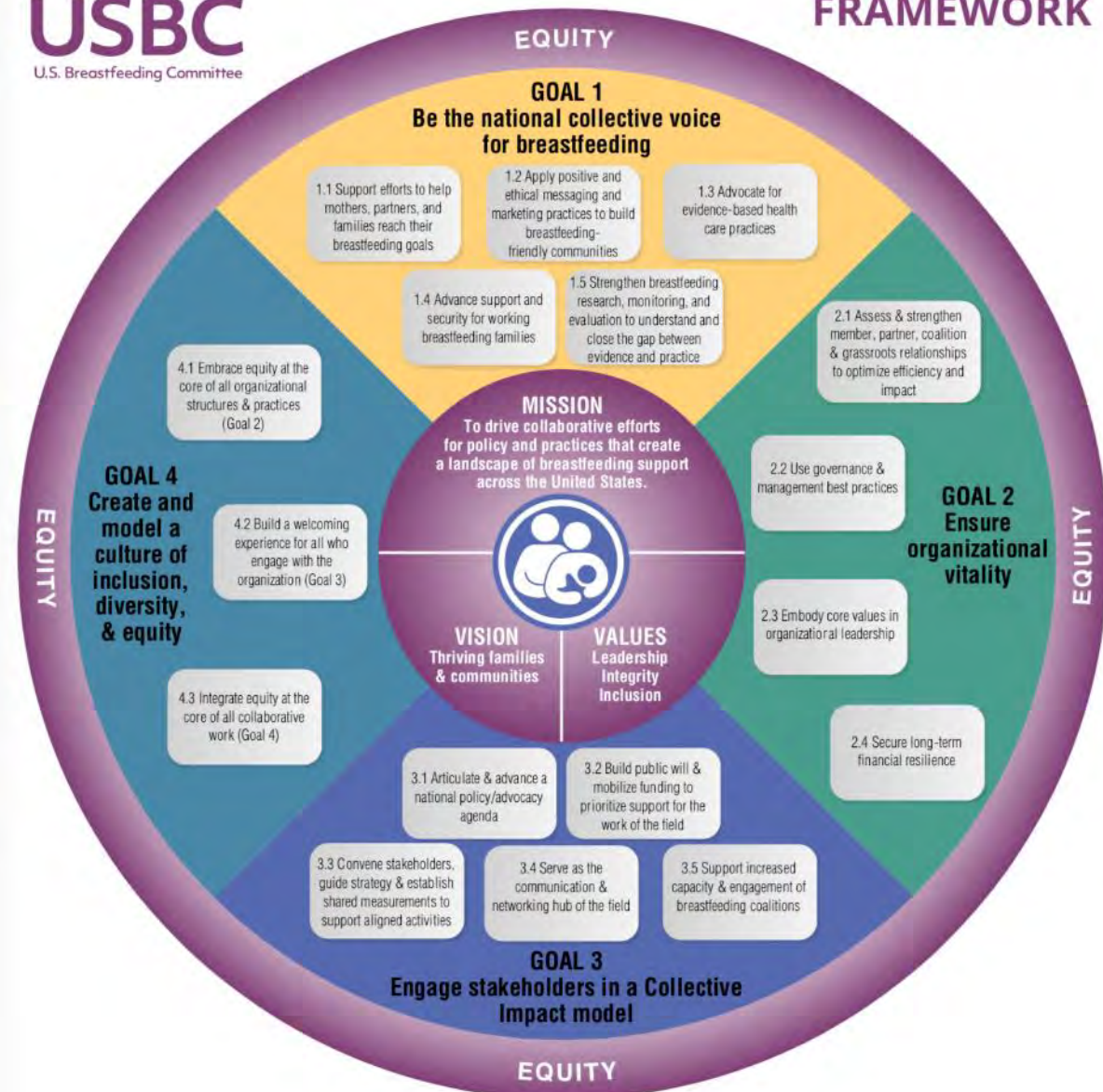
- Conscious Convening
- Equity-Informed Facilitation
- Research of landscape
- Mediation/negotiation
- Surveys of stakeholders

USBC Strategic Framework



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

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



Collective Impact Framework | Constellation Formation Pathway

	Pre-Pathway Stage NETWORKING	Pathway Stage 1 INCUBATION CONVERSATION	Pathway Stage 2 EMERGING CONSTELLATION	Pathway Stage 3 ORGANIZING CONSTELLATION	Pathway Stage 4 ACTIVE CONSTELLATION
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations with interest in a topic, networking in various forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations interested in exploring the potential for collective action Facilitator trained to lift all voices, surface themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations keen to select priority strategies for collective action Steward organization/s with the capacity to lead on the topic Backbone organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations ready to negotiate partnership agreements Steward organization/s Invited stakeholders as appropriate Backbone organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations actively engaged in advancing priority strategies Steward organization/s Invited stakeholders Backbone organization in formalized role/s
Backbone Organization's Primary Role	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
Engagement & DEI Approach	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
Primary Goals	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
Evaluation & Measurement	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
Contributions to the Field	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.
Examples from USBC-affiliated Constellations	Online Learning Communities, webinar learning series	Facilitated member organization incubation conversations	Constellation online workspaces, and support for Steward/s	Terms of Reference (agreements) for active Constellations	Continuity of Care Blueprint , Lactation Support Provider Descriptor Table

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: Luke Leung



United States Policy Landscape

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



PARENTS

PROGRAMS

POLICIES

PLAN



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

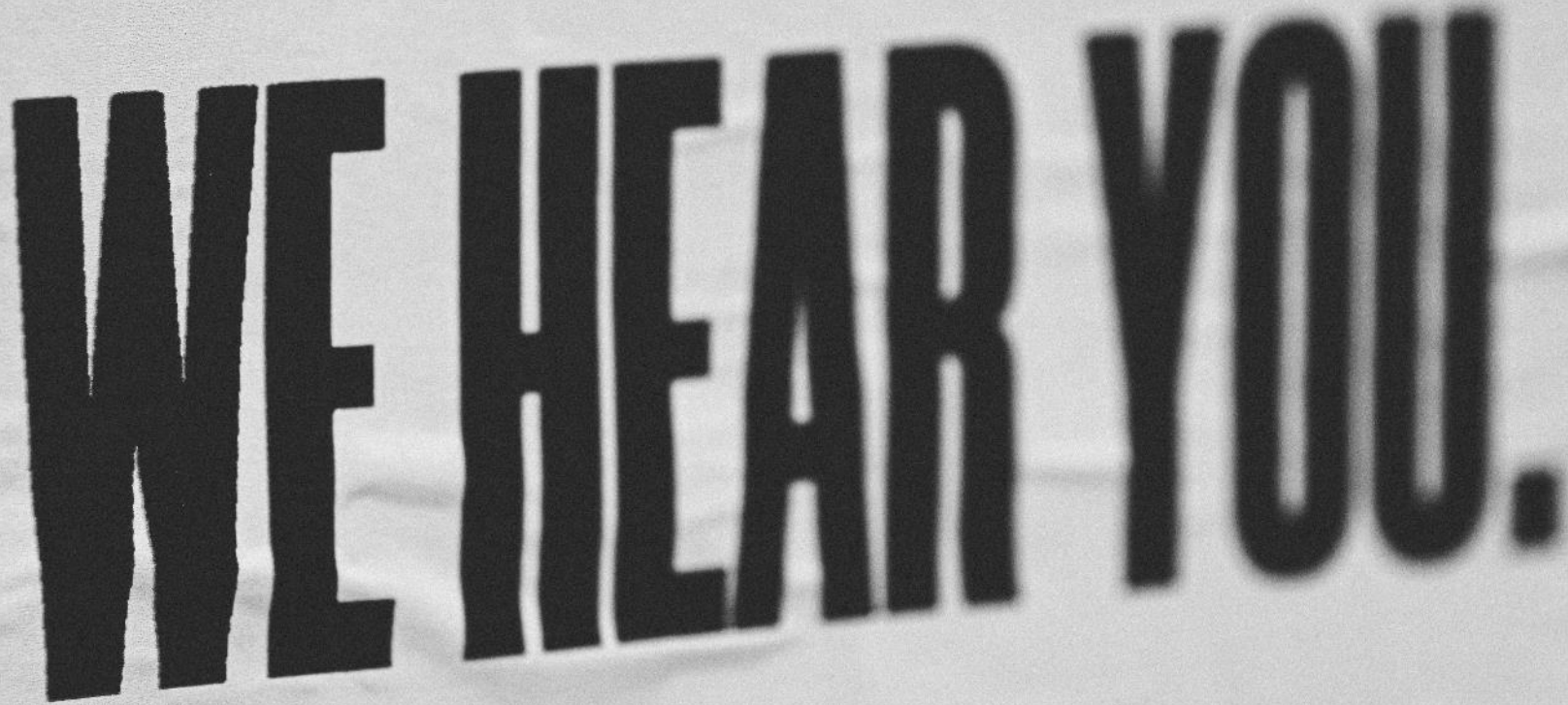


Workplace protections



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

[illegible][illegible]

Breastfeeding Report, 2023

State and Territorial Breastfeeding Reports

Coming
Soon

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





Other tools for consideration

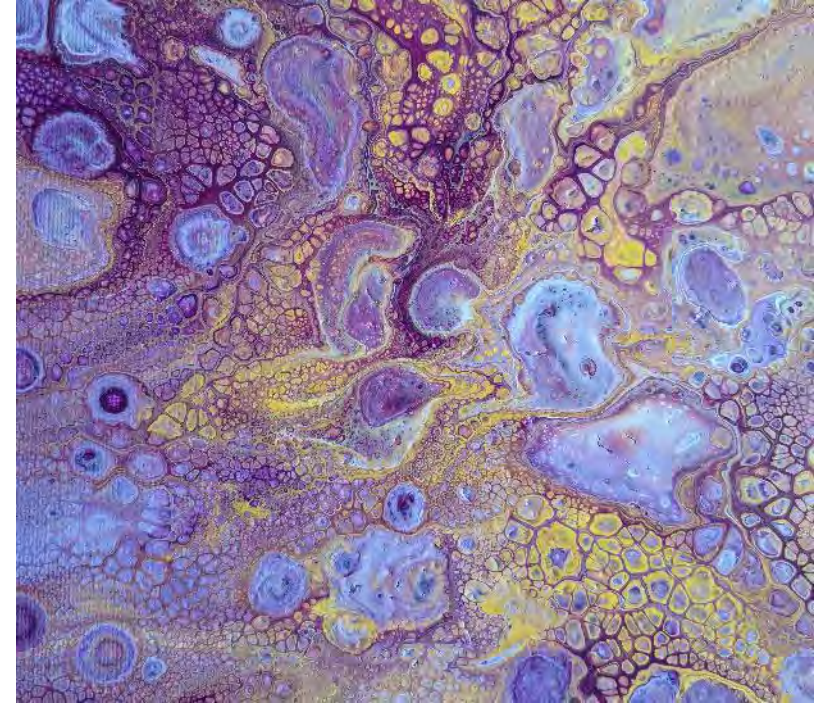
- Coalition and member directories
- First Food Connection Hub
- Tools available to Constellation Stewards – at USBC or within membership
 - Root cause analysis template
 - Terms of Reference template
 - Constellation Pathway Record Template

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?



Photo credit: Luke Leung



Examples of Shared Aspiration Creating Policy Change

USBC Active Constellations



Workplace Support & Paid Leave

■ Levers for change:

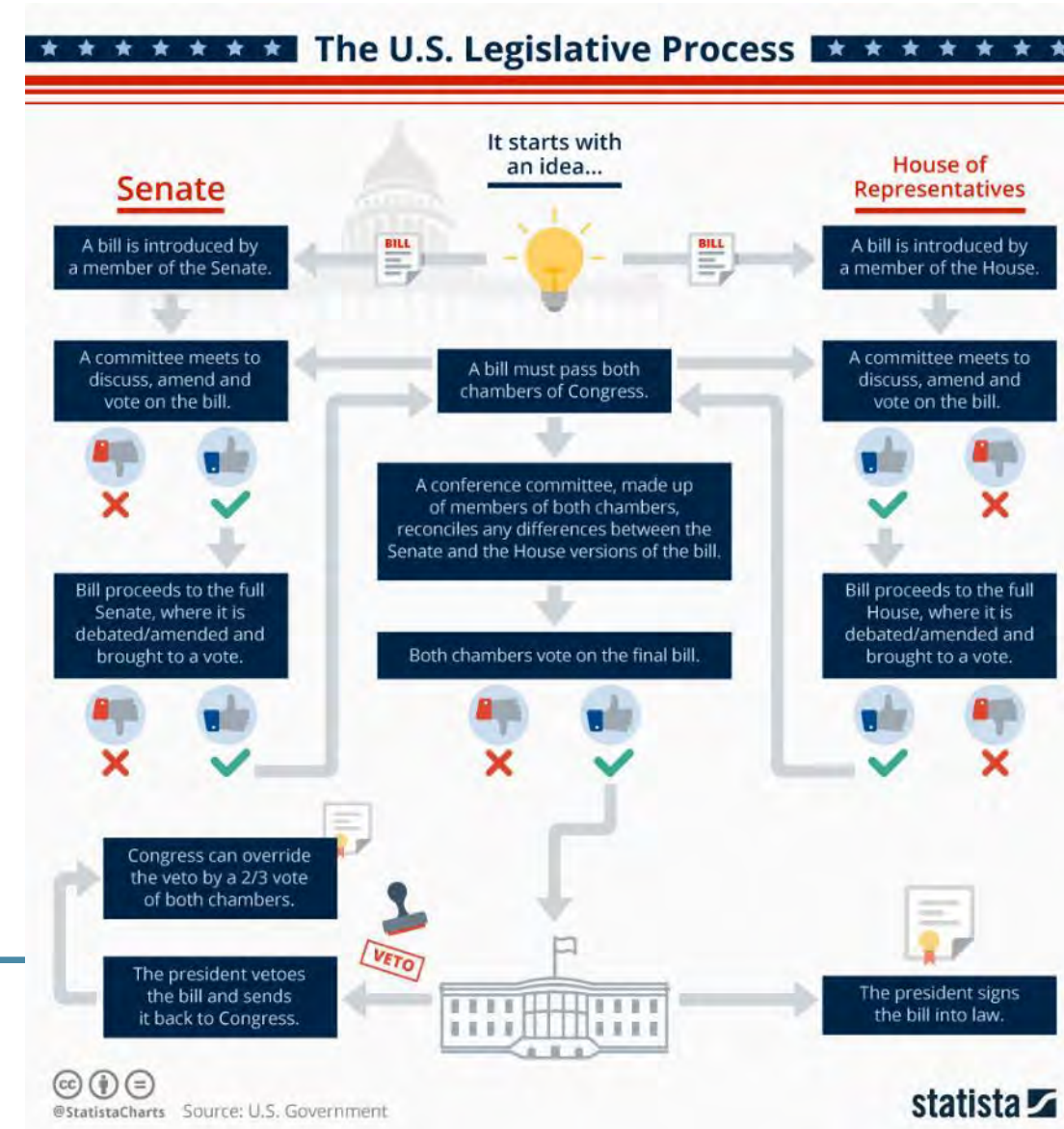
■ Publications:

- 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**¹ 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?



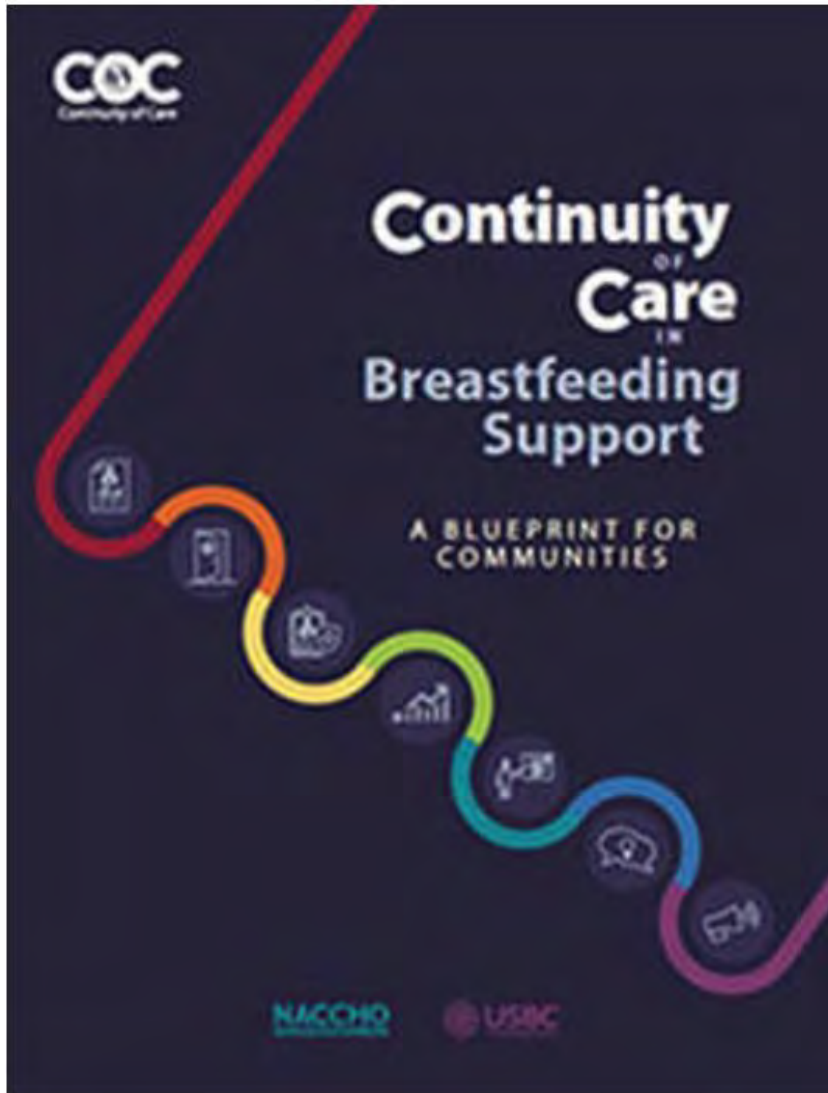
Maternity Care Practices

- 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?



Photo credit: Luke Leung

