

# New York Breastfeeding Report, 2023



**USBC**

U.S. Breastfeeding Committee

## About this Report

Breastfeeding has a profound impact on population health outcomes. The [evidence for the value of human milk](#) to the overall health of infants, children, and mothers is scientific, robust, and continually reaffirmed by new research. Breastfed infants are at lower risk of certain infections and sudden unexplained infant death. Children who were breastfed have decreased risk of obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, asthma, and childhood leukemia. Women who breastfeed reduce their risk of chronic illnesses, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers. A [recent CDC study](#) of over 3 million U.S. births found that ever breastfeeding is associated with a 26% reduction in the odds of post-perinatal (between 7-364 days) infant death.

The [American Academy of Pediatrics recommends](#) infants be exclusively breastfed for about six months with continued breastfeeding while introducing complementary foods for two years or beyond. Unfortunately, barriers to establishing and maintaining the breastfeeding relationship are persistent and pervasive in the United States, and only a small proportion of dyads meet these recommendations.

This is why increasing breastfeeding rates and creating lactation-friendly environments have been identified as critical public health priorities both nationally and globally. This year, in addition to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many families also had to navigate the devastating infant formula recall and shortage, stripping away their confidence in keeping their babies safely fed.

The good news is that federal investments are making a difference for babies, mothers, and our nation. The New York breastfeeding report describes how breastfeeding rates and other measures compare to national levels, lists the coalitions serving communities in the state, and highlights state and community-based lactation projects made possible through federal funding in 2021 and 2022.

Our values and priorities are reflected through the care and attention we show to our nation's infants and young children, and we all have a role to play. In the words of Surgeon General Regina Benjamin, "We can all help make breastfeeding easier."

We hope this report illustrates the importance of breastfeeding and human milk and sheds a light on the policy, system, and environmental factors that impact infant feeding outcomes. To access reports from other states and territories, please visit [www.usbreastfeeding.org/state-breastfeeding-reports](http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/state-breastfeeding-reports).



Nikia Sankofa  
Executive Director  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee



Amelia Psmythe Seger  
Deputy Director  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee

## Breastfeeding Rates

See how New York breastfeeding rates and other measures compare to national rates and targets set by the Healthy People 2030 (HP2030) initiative.

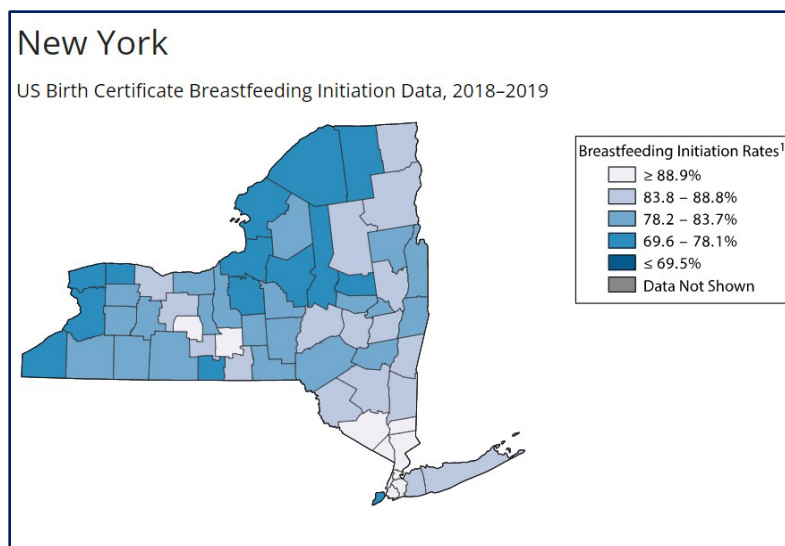
	Breastfeeding Initiation Rate	Largest Disparity Between Racial/Ethnic Groups
<b>New York</b>	87.9%	8.7%
<b>U.S. National</b>	84.1%	16.7%

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
<b>New York</b>	23.4%	36.3%	24.4%
<b>U.S. National</b>	24.9%	35.9%	19.2%
<b>HP2030 Target</b>	42.4%	54.1%	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.

State and territorial breastfeeding rates provide important insights about how families are supported, but data shows that there are significant disparities across counties.



Source: [CDC Breastfeeding Initiation Rates and Maps by County](#), presenting 2018–2019 National Vital Statistics System data.

## 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
<b>New York WIC Rates</b>	10.7%	37.4%	48.1%	51.9%
<b>National WIC Rates</b>	12.1%	21.9%	33.9%	66.1%

Source: [Fiscal Year 2021 WIC Breastfeeding Data Local Agency Report](#). Breastfeeding and formula feeding rates are measured as a percentage of participating children under one year of age.

## Creating a Landscape of Support

The policy, systems, and environments that surround and shape our lives have a profound impact on the infant feeding experience, either helping or hindering breastfeeding. Maternity care practices, paid family and medical leave, and childcare practices are proven to impact breastfeeding outcomes, and are highlighted in the CDC Breastfeeding Report Card.

	% of live births occurring at Baby-Friendly facilities	mPINC Score	Has enacted paid family and medical leave legislation	# of weeks available to care for a new child	ECE licensing breastfeeding support score
<b>New York</b>	35.1%	83	Yes	12	70
<b>U.S. National</b>	28.9%	81	No	-	-

Source: [CDC Breastfeeding Report Card](#). CDC's national Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey assesses maternity care practices that affect how babies are fed. Among states with enacted paid family and medical leave legislation, the number of weeks presented are those that can be claimed by eligible employees for the care of a new child by birth, adoption, or foster care. ECE score indicates the extent to which a state's licensing regulation for early child education centers meet the Caring for our Children's standard to encourage and fully support breastfeeding/feeding of breast milk.

## Breastfeeding Coalitions Serving in New York

An extensive network of state, tribal, territorial, local, and cultural breastfeeding coalitions across the United States are working to create policy, systems, and environmental interventions to better serve babies, mothers, and families. The following coalitions serve in New York:

- Breastfeeding Initiative of Ulster County
- [New York City Breastfeeding Leadership Council, Inc](#)
- [New York Statewide Breastfeeding Coalition](#)

## *Federally Funded Lactation Projects in New York*

Each year funding is allocated to a variety of federally funded programs that address infant nutrition security through the federal appropriations process. These investments are making a real difference. Breastfeeding rates have risen substantially in recent decades, but additional efforts are needed to help our nation reach Healthy People 2030 goals.

Federally funded lactation support programs are low-cost, high-impact interventions that work to reduce the persistent and pervasive barriers to breastfeeding success. This funding supports critical national efforts, including monitoring and evaluation, research, public education, resource development, and beyond. Funding also supports a wide range of state and community-level projects to address the challenges faced by specific populations. These programs support and reinforce each other, reaching distinct audiences and environments.

See how federal investments are making a difference in New York below.

### *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

- 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 2022, this program was funded at \$9.75 million.
- 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, New York is supporting six "Creating Breastfeeding Friendly Communities" regional grantees that are implementing interventions to support breastfeeding that address continuity of care, community support, and workplace compliance.
- [\*\*State Perinatal Quality Collaboratives\*\*](#) (PQCs) are state or multi-state networks of multidisciplinary teams, working to improve outcomes for maternal and infant health. PQCs do this by advancing evidence-informed clinical practices and processes using quality improvement (QI) principles to address gaps in care. CDC's Division of Reproductive Health is currently providing support for the New York Perinatal Quality Collaborative, which is working to support breastfeeding/human milk feeding.
- [\*\*EMPower Best Practices\*\*](#) is a hospital-based quality improvement initiative funded by the CDC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. The purpose of this initiative is to improve knowledge and skills in evidence-based maternity practices supportive of optimal infant nutrition with a focus on culturally diverse, at-risk populations and those from low-income families. This project is coordinated in partnership with the Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Population Health Improvement Partners. The EMPower Best Practices initiative is supporting the following hospitals in New York:
  - Good Samaritan University Hospital
  - North Shore University Hospital
  - Northwell Huntington Hospital
  - NYC Health + Hospitals Lincoln
  - NYC Health + Hospitals Queens
  - Strong Memorial Hospital



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

- The purpose of the **Healthy Start program** is to improve health outcomes before, during, and after pregnancy, and reduce racial/ethnic differences in rates of infant death and adverse perinatal outcomes through local projects that can include lactation education. New York received six Healthy Start awards totaling \$6,806,652. Onondaga County was awarded \$980,000 and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Inc. in the Bronx was awarded \$1,165,280. In addition, the Community Health Center of Richmond, Inc. on Staten Island, Fund for Public Health in New York, Inc., Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership, Inc. and Public Health Solutions in New York City each received \$1,165,343.
- The **Healthy Start Doula Supplement** provides funding to increase the availability of doulas in Healthy Start service areas most affected by infant and maternal mortality and to increase the number of women with a higher risk of poor birth outcomes receiving doula services. In 2021, funding in New York was directed to Community Health Center of Richmond, Inc. In 2022, funding in New York was directed to Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Northern Manhattan Perinatal Partnership, Inc. and Public Health Solutions.
- The **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program** supports pregnant people and parents with young children who live in communities that face greater risks and barriers to achieving positive maternal and child health outcomes, including through lactation support. In 2022, the New York Department of Health received \$8,613,186 in funding to implement the MIECHV program.

## *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 New York agencies were awarded in 2021 and 2022:
  - 2022 Gold Award:
    - Cattaraugus County
    - Clinton County WIC Office
    - Livingston-Wyoming WIC
    - Long Island Federal Qualified Health Center Inc. (LIFQHC) 322
    - Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center
    - Tioga Opportunities, Inc. WIC Program
    - WIC of Columbia/Greene-Catholic Charities
    - Monroe County WIC
  - 2022 Premiere Award:
    - The Society for the Protection and Care of Children (SPCC) WIC
  - 2021 Gold Award:
    - Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Center
    - Catholic Charities WIC of Buffalo
    - Morris Heights Health Center WIC Program 269
    - Northwell Health Staten Island University Hospital
    - Oak Orchard WIC #234
    - Ryan Health WIC Program Agency 252
    - SBH Health System

## Office on Women's Health

- The **Reducing Disparities in Breastfeeding Innovation Challenge** sought innovative ways to increase breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates and decrease disparities. In New York, the Community Health Center of Richmond, Inc was a winner of the Reducing Disparities in Breastfeeding Innovation Challenge. Since 2017, the CHCR Breastfeeding Support Program has increased breastfeeding initiation and 6-month continuation rates by 151% and 93%, respectively, among vulnerable populations in the Staten Island borough of New York, N.Y.
- The **Racial Equity in Postpartum Care Challenge** sought innovative methods to improve equity of postpartum care for Black or African American and American Indian/Alaska Native women enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program. In New York, the following initiatives were the winners of the HHS Racial Equity in Postpartum Challenge:
  - Sistas Van, Home Visiting, Telemedicine Mental Health Model from Black Women's Blueprint, Inc. in Brooklyn is a program that provides care and seeks to extend care throughout the state of New York by using mobile and remote services to address gaps in care for underserved postpartum women. The program uses a combination of approaches, including mobile health vans, home visiting programs, and models that include care, treatment, and referrals to address mental health needs.
  - Maternal Health Outcomes and Morbidity Collaborative (MOMS), from Northwell Health, Inc. in Westchester County is a program that serves over 8 million patients throughout communities in New York. It utilizes comprehensive care coordination and patient-centered approaches throughout the prenatal and postpartum period to identify risk factors and connect patients with medical, behavioral health, and social supports and services.

## National Institutes of Health

- The National Institutes of Health and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development **conduct and fund a variety of clinical research** related to breastfeeding and breast milk. In New York, the following organizations received funding:
  - Roswell Park Cancer Institute Corporation was funded to complete a research project titled "Relationships between parity, breastfeeding and ER- breast cancer in African American women: Elucidating the biologic underpinnings at the molecular and cellular level."
  - State University New York Stony Brook was funded to complete the following research projects:
    - "Maturation of inhibitory circuits in the gustatory cortex and expression of taste preference"
    - "Cortical mechanisms for the postnatal development of taste preference"
  - University of Rochester was funded to complete the following research projects:
    - "Longitudinal Changes in Weight and Biology in the Pregnancy-Postpartum Period and Subsequent Cardiometabolic Risk"
    - "Detection of Food Allergens in Human Milk"
    - "Developmental infant effects of exposure to high doses of oral insulin in human milk"
    - "Development of Mucosal and Systemic Immunity and Risk of Food Allergy"
    - "Role of B. infantis in Development of Atopic Diseases"
  - Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences was funded to complete a research project titled "Role of gut microbiota-induced IgG in enteric host defense."
  - Population Council was funded to complete a research project titled "Novel pre-coital, non-hormonal multipurpose prevention technology (MPT)."
  - New York University School of Medicine was funded to complete the following research projects:
    - "Physiological identification and characterization of PVN neuronal populations"
    - "Oxytocin modulation of female aggression"

- Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai was funded to complete the following research projects:
  - “Antibody-dependent cellular phagocytosis by human breastmilk leukocytes: impact of antibody class, stage of lactation, and target size”
  - “Effect of Maternal IBD, Microbiome and Early Life Events on the Bacterial Colonization and Mucosal Immunity in the Offspring”
  - “Comprehensive assessment of SARS-CoV-2-reactive antibodies in human milk to determine their potential as a COVID-19 therapeutic and as a means to prevent infection of breastfed babies”
- Columbia University Health Sciences was funded to complete a research project titled “Trial of Human Milk Oligosaccharide-based synbiotics for HIV-exposed uninfected children.”
- Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory was funded to complete a research project titled “Defining the cellular and molecular effects of aging and age of pregnancy on breast tissue homeostasis and cancer initiation.”
- Cornell University was funded to complete the following research projects:
  - “Determination of biomarkers of iron status and inflammation in saliva”
  - “Nutritional Quality of Breast Milk after 6 Months Postpartum in India”
- NYU Long Island School of Medicine was funded to complete a research project titled “Cold milk as a novel therapy for dysphagia in preterm infants.”