

January 9, 2026

Dear Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to **direct \$20M to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding line item** in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. This \$20M investment, \$10.5M above the FY 2024 level, represents a critical course correction in our nation's investment in the health, safety, and well-being of infants and young children.

Building Health from the Start: A High-Value Investment

The beginning of pregnancy through the child's first 1,000 days are critical periods for securing and establishing lifelong health for both mothers and babies. Creating a strong foundation for health during this period not only reduces long-term healthcare costs but also boosts economic productivity by supporting the development of a healthier, more resilient population.

Low breastfeeding rates in the United States [cost our nation](#) millions of dollars through higher health system costs, lost productivity, and higher household expenditures; improving breastfeeding practices through programs and policies is one of the best investments a country can make, as every dollar invested is estimated to result in a [\\$35 economic return](#). Furthermore, low breastfeeding rates are associated with global [economic losses](#) of about \$302 billion annually, which is equal to approximately 0.49% of world gross national income.

Advancing Chronic Disease Prevention and Infant Nutrition Security

Breastfeeding plays an essential role in establishing good nutrition, maintaining healthy body weight, reducing the risk of chronic disease and [infant mortality](#), and improving maternal and infant health outcomes. Breastfed children have a [decreased risk](#) of obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, asthma, and childhood leukemia. Women who breastfeed [reduce their risk](#) of specific chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and breast and ovarian cancers. On a relational level, the hormones produced while breastfeeding, like oxytocin, strengthen the [maternal-infant bond](#) and improve emotional well-being.

The American Academy of Pediatrics [recommends](#) that infants be exclusively breastfed for approximately six months with continued breastfeeding during the introduction of complementary foods for two years or as long as mutually desired by the mother and child. However, breastfeeding rates drop sharply after birth, with [recent data](#) showing that even though 84.1% of infants start out breastfeeding, the rate falls dramatically in the weeks after birth, with only 57.5% of infants breastfeeding exclusively at one month of age. Making matters worse are [the infant formula recall and resulting shortage](#), [natural](#)

[disasters which destabilized infant nutrition](#), and the [continued closure of maternity hospitals](#). These events demonstrate infrastructure gaps and a lack of resilience in formula safety and supply systems, putting millions of babies in danger.

While the health benefits of breastfeeding are well established, many families face significant challenges in healthcare, community, and workplace settings that hinder successful breastfeeding. Barriers are particularly pronounced in rural and underserved areas, where [access to supportive services and resources can be limited](#). Strengthening breastfeeding support in these communities is critical to improving maternal and infant health outcomes, while also addressing broader public health concerns such as early childhood nutrition and chronic disease prevention.

Maximizing Public Health and Economic Returns

In the United States, chronic disease management contributes [trillions of dollars](#) to annual healthcare costs, which increased breastfeeding rates can help reduce. In the workplace, employers see [significant cost savings](#) when their workers are able to maintain breastfeeding after returning to work. Increased breastfeeding rates are also associated with [reduced environmental impact and associated expenses](#). Savings can be seen at home as well, as following optimal breastfeeding practices [reduces household expenditures](#). [Investments in infant nutrition last a lifetime](#), paying long-term dividends to economic and human development. Economists have also completed analyses finding that investing in nutrition is among the most cost-effective development actions, laying the groundwork for successful investments in other sectors.

The unique nutritional needs of infants and young children should be a top funding priority. Within the CDC, the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) works to prevent chronic disease, improve maternal and infant health outcomes, and respond to emerging health crises. [DNPAO efforts](#) are high-value, low-cost public health interventions that support states, territories, tribal nations, local governments, hospitals, and communities in advancing breastfeeding continuity of care, as well as increasing access to breastfeeding-friendly environments within hospitals, workplaces, and community spaces.

Strengthening Outcomes Through Increased Investment

Since 2012, Congress has allocated funds to the CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program. In FY 2024, level funding of \$9.75 million was maintained for this line item. This investment has [yielded a strong return](#), with the percentage of babies who start out breastfeeding increasing from 73 percent in 2004 to 84 percent in 2021, and the share of births in [hospitals with supportive breastfeeding practices](#) rising more than sevenfold— from 3.8 percent in 2010 to nearly 29 percent in 2021— now encompassing over one million babies each year.

Increased funding is needed, however, to facilitate ongoing, critical efforts to build a strong public health infrastructure of breastfeeding support. Increased funding for the Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program line item will allow DNPAO to:

- Maintain and expand critical monitoring and surveillance activities, including annual analysis of the National Immunization Survey (NIS), the bi-annual Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) Survey, and the National Breastfeeding Report Card.
- Disseminate breastfeeding data, guidelines, and key resources via CDC's website to support public health efforts.
- Expand quality improvement initiatives to restore and strengthen maternity care best practices in hospitals.
- Enhance care coordination and strengthen the lactation support landscape through policy, systems, and environmental change interventions to improve breastfeeding rates.
- Develop national and state-level infrastructure to integrate infant feeding and lactation support into emergency response systems and food security programs.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) is currently [conducting a consensus study](#) to provide an evidence-based cost-benefit analysis of the macroeconomic, social, and health impact of the United States' current breastfeeding rates and goals. Increased funding for the CDC Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding program will ensure that the study's findings translate into meaningful action.

Increased funding for the Hospitals Promoting Breastfeeding Program will bolster these successes, benefiting families, public health, and the economy. The American people, especially our babies, are the nation's most valuable resource. Please support this crucial investment in infant nutrition security.

CO-SIGNERS

Total Number of Signers as of January 9, 2026: 184

International, National, & Tribal

Organizations:

A Better Balance

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

American Academy of Nursing

American Association of Birth Centers

American College of Osteopathic
Pediatricians

Amwell

Association of State Public Health
Nutritionists

Baby-Friendly USA

Barton Dunant

Breastfeeding Family Friendly
Communities

Breastfeeding USA

Center for Biological Diversity

Global Military Lactation Community

HealthConnect One

Healthy Horizons

Human Milk Banking Association of North
America

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
Breastfeeding Coalition

International Board of Lactation
Consultant Examiners

International Childbirth Education
Association

La Leche League of United States West
Area Network

La Leche League USA

Lactation Education Resources

Mamava

Medela LLC

MomsRising

National Association of Pediatric Nurse
Practitioners

National Nurse-Led Care Consortium

National League for Nursing

National Perinatal Association

Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC) Society
NikkiLeeHealth

Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere

Symonette Strategies & Solutions, LLC

Talk and Thrive Education

The Salvador E. Alvarez Institute for Non-
Violence

The U.S. Breastfeeding Committee

The Well Project

United States Lactation Consultant
Association

Regional, State, & Local Organizations:

Alabama

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee
Baobab Birth Collective

Alaska

Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition

Arizona

Mountain Park Health Center

Arkansas

Anchorage Pediatric Group
Beyond Lactation

California

Alameda County Public Health
Department
Amador Calaveras Breastfeeding Coalition
Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and
Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Lactation
Collaborative of California
Breastfeeding Consultants of San Diego
BreastfeedLA
California Breastfeeding Coalition
Central Valley Lactation Association
Inland Empire Breastfeeding Coalition
Kindred Bravely
La Leche League of California, Hawaii, and
Nevada

La Leche League of Oakland, California

Mother's Own Milk Matters

Nightingale Nursing

Nursing Mothers Counsel, Inc.

Sage Transformations

Salud Para La Gente

Sweetmilk Lactation Support

Tiburcio Vasquez WIC Program

Wildflower Health

Colorado

Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition
HCA Rose Medical Center
Yellowtail Lactation Consulting

Connecticut

Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition

Delaware

Breastfeeding Coalition of Delaware
Mindful Motherhood Lactation and Infant
Feeding Services
Nemours Children's Health System

District of Columbia

DC Breastfeeding Coalition
IMA Nourish
Mamatoto Village

Florida

Florida Breastfeeding Coalition

Florida Chapter of American Academy of
Pediatrics

MaryCatherine Jones Consulting, LLC

LoveLoy Marriages, Mediation & More,
Inc.

Tampa Bay Breastfeeding Task Force

The Birth Company

Georgia

Athens Community Breastfeeding
Coalition

Georgia Breastfeeding Coalition

Georgia Southern University

Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere

Wonderlove Lactation Services

Hawaii

Breastfeeding Hawaii

Hui Malama Ola Na OIwi

Normalize Nourishment

Illinois

Soak Lactation

Sudden Infant Death Services of Illinois,
Inc.

Indiana

Fort Wayne Pediatrics

Iowa

MercyOne

Kansas

Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

Northwest Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

Reno County Breastfeeding Coalition

Kentucky

Lactation Improvement Network of
Kentucky, Inc.

Maine

Maine State Breastfeeding Coalition

Maryland

BreastfeedingWorks

Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition

Massachusetts

Baystate Medical Center

Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition

Michigan

Ingham County WIC

Michigan Breastfeeding Network

Next Generation Family Services

Saginaw Community Breastfeeding
Coalition

Saginaw County Health Department
Southeast Michigan IBCLC's of Color

Minnesota

Birth Justice Collaborative
Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition
Minnesota Milk Bank for Babies
WCMCA, Inc.
West Central Minnesota Communities
Action

Mississippi

Every Mother, Inc.
Gulf Coast Breastfeeding Center LLC

Missouri

Healthy Nourishments, LLC
Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition
St. Louis Breastfeeding Coalition

Montana

Community Hospital of Anaconda
The Children's Clinic

Nebraska

MilkWorks
Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition

New Hampshire

Embracing Lactation LLC
New Hampshire Breastfeeding Task Force

New Jersey

Branchburg Lactation
Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center
La Leche League of the Garden State
La Leche League of
Hillsborough/Bridgewater NJ
New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition
The City of East Orange WIC

New Mexico

New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force

New York

Birth By Queens
Breastfeeding Coordinator
Cortland Community Action Program
FF Thompson
Finger Lakes Lactation, LLC
Nourishing Pathways Lactation
Neugarten Family Birth Center at
Northern Dutchess Hospital
New York Lactation Consultant
Association
Supporting Our Mothers Initiative

The New York Milk Bank

North Carolina

Breastfeed Durham

Breastfeed Orange NC

La Leche League Alliance for

Breastfeeding Education

Life By The Drop Lactation LLC

Little Roo Lactation and Wellness, LLC

Mattea's Lactation Services

North Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition

North Carolina Department of Health and
Human Services

Piedmont Health Services

Wholesome Lactation Care, PLLC

Ohio

Appalachian Breastfeeding Network

Ohio Department of Health

Project Milk Mission

Oklahoma

Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding
Advocates

Oregon

Northwest Mothers Milk Bank

Pennsylvania

Golden Love Flows

La Leche League of Eastern Pennsylvania

Luzerne County Breastfeeding Coalition

Reclaim Black Motherhood

Puerto Rico

Alimentación Segura Infantil

South Carolina

Lactation Station & More

The Baby Lady

South Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition

Tennessee

Breastfeeding Sisters That Are Receiving
Support

Knox County WIC

Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee

Tennessee Breastfeeding Coalition

Texas

Baylor Scott and White Health

Tarrant County Breastfeeding Coalition

Texas Department of State Health
Services

The Breast Choice Lactation Services

Utah

Comunidad Materna Utah
MOSAIC Inter-Faith Ministries

Vermont

Vermont Breastfeeding Network

Virginia

La Leche League of Springfield VA &
Neighbors

Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition

Washington

Kitsap County Lactation Coalition

Nutrition First

South Sound Lactation Network

Washington State Lactation Collaborative

West Central Community Center WIC

West Virginia

West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance

Wisconsin

The Breastfeeding Alliance of Northeast

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Association of Lactation

Consultants