



NOURISHING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

A National Plan for First Foods, Breastfeeding, and Lactation Support through Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change



VISION:

To shape and strengthen policies, systems, and environments that advance community-wide support and ensure equitable, affirming, and culturally responsive care for breastfeeding, lactation practices, and infant nutrition security, by engaging diverse partners that honor families, foster intergenerational knowledge, and promote community self-determination.

WHY THIS PLAN? WHY NOW?

Infant nutrition security is a systems-level issue at the intersection of public health, equity, and resilience.

Systems disruptions (supply chain instability, disasters, access gaps) expose longstanding vulnerabilities.

Human milk feeding is the cornerstone of infant nutrition security.

This plan is a shared national framework to align cross-sector action.

THE PSE FRAMEWORK

Breastfeeding outcomes are shaped by an ecosystem — not just individual knowledge or intention.

POLICY

Coverage, protections, funding, and regulations

SYSTEMS

How services are organized, delivered, and coordinated

ENVIRONMENT

Social norms, physical spaces, and marketing influences

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRACTICE

HEALTH SYSTEMS & CLINICS

Adopt breastfeeding standards and strengthen referral systems.

EMPLOYERS

Improve accommodations & paid leave support.

RESEARCHERS & EVALUATORS

Use participatory methods & share actionable data.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Expand culturally responsive lactation & peer support services.

ORGANIZATIONS & COALITIONS

Provide trusted support & lead community engagement efforts.

POLICY PARTNERS

Advance policy reform, sustained funding, & accountability.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

A Summary of Goals and Action Steps

EXPAND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LACTATION CARE

- Advocate for access to lactation support and ensure this essential health service is fully covered by both public and private insurers.
- Advance equitable reimbursement for all lactation support providers.
- Invest in community-led, culturally responsive lactation services.
- Integrate lactation support providers into coordinated care teams.
- Embed breastfeeding standards into healthcare and public health systems.

STRENGTHEN HUMAN MILK SYSTEMS & INFANT NUTRITION ACCESS

- Strengthen donor milk banking and safe community milk sharing systems.
- Expand federal nutrition program support for access to human milk.

ENHANCE COMMUNITY CAPACITY, EDUCATION, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Integrate breastfeeding education across the lifespan and sectors.
- Strengthen infant feeding preparedness and leadership in emergencies.
- Invest in a diverse and culturally responsive lactation workforce.

ADVANCE POLICY & FUNDING FOR EQUITABLE LACTATION

- Ensure affected communities lead lactation policy decision-making.
- Leverage public commitments to advance breastfeeding-supportive policies.
- Expand paid family leave and workplace lactation protections.
- Increase sustained funding for community-based lactation support programs.

SHIFT SOCIAL NORMS & REDUCE STIGMA

- Promote breastfeeding-friendly public spaces and business practices.
- Launch inclusive breastfeeding public health campaigns for marginalized communities.
- Increase diverse and inclusive breastfeeding representation across media and education.
- Expand community education on breastfeeding benefits and support resources

CONFRONT & REGULATE PREDATORY MARKETING PRACTICES

- Strengthen policies that restrict misleading marketing practices that undermine breastfeeding.

STRENGTHEN RESEARCH & DATA GOVERNANCE

- Strengthen community capacity for breastfeeding data and research governance.
- Ensure community lived experience informs policy, systems, and environmental change

CALL TO ACTION:

Infant nutrition security requires structural action. Human milk feeding is the cornerstone — and policies, systems, and environments must make it feasible, protected, and normalized.

Identify one strategy category to operationalize in your setting or community this year.