

Draft Breastfeeding Action Plan

Objective:

By September 30, 2025, increase the proportion of Iowa WIC participants who initiate breastfeeding, breastfeed exclusively through six months, and continue to breastfeed until one year of age, by improving breastfeeding support and awareness through partnership development and providing extended, consistent education for all WIC staff.

Purpose Statement:

According to the Center for Disease Control 2022 Breastfeeding Report Card, 82.4% of Iowa mothers initiated breastfeeding, 27% continued breastfeeding exclusively until the recommended six months, and 38.2% breastfed until one year of age in 2019. The Healthy People 2030 goals for breastfeeding include increasing the proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through six months of age to 42.4% and the proportion that are breastfed at one year to 54.1%. Although progress has been made towards improving breastfeeding rates amongst the WIC population, the most recent Iowa WIC Program data through 2022 shows that WIC participants fall behind the general population with 71% initiating breastfeeding, 11% continuing to exclusively breastfeed at six months, and 21% continuing to breastfeed until one year of age.

In an effort to create awareness of the need to improve breastfeeding rates among the WIC population, in 2023 the Iowa WIC Program released the first Iowa WIC Breastfeeding Report to highlight program successes and determine areas for improvement related to breastfeeding. Also, in 2023 the first ever Iowa Breastfeeding Strategic Plan was completed and released, outlining four goals that include building collaborative partnerships, improving access to lactation services, increasing community-based support for breastfeeding, and improving access to donor breast milk.

The plan for FY25 is to increase breastfeeding rates through continued awareness by updating and releasing the Iowa WIC Report that outlines the status of breastfeeding in Iowa annually, and to continue activities described in the Iowa Strategic Plan. Activities to be implemented that will increase breastfeeding support and resource accessibility include offering local WIC agency staff trainings, promoting collaborative partnerships, and providing resources through a centralized breastfeeding resource database.

This plan will be carried out as a joint effort of the breastfeeding strategic plan partners, and state and local WIC staff.

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