



# Alaska Breastfeeding Report

Breastfeeding is a proven primary prevention strategy, building a foundation for life-long health and wellness. Here's how Alaska's breastfeeding rates and other measures (2015 births) compare to national rates and targets set by the Healthy People 2020 initiative.

BREASTFEEDING RATES & PROGRESS	% ever breastfed	% duration to 12 months	% exclusive at 6 months	% of births at Baby-Friendly facilities	# of Baby-Friendly facilities
Alaska	93.1	49.7	42.1	3.4	2
U.S. National	83.2	35.9	24.9	26.1	555
HP2020 Target	81.9	34.1	25.5	8.1	N/A

A 2016 study published in the journal *Maternal & Child Nutrition* quantified excess cases of pediatric and maternal disease and death and associated costs attributable to suboptimal breastfeeding (using rates for 2014 births and defining "optimal" as 90% of infants breastfed according to medical recommendations). Here's how Alaska's costs resulting from sub-optimal rates compare:

COSTS OF SUB-OPTIMAL BREASTFEEDING RATES	Medical Costs of Sub-Optimal Rates	Non-Medical Costs of Sub-Optimal Rates	Death Costs of Sub-Optimal Rates
Alaska	\$4,431,308	\$2,336,629	\$18,099,889
U.S. National	\$2,405,023,438	\$1,093,681,596	\$10,798,725,299

## Federally Funded Breastfeeding Projects

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity

- 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, Alaska's interventions support the youngest Alaskans growing up healthy and strong with breastfeeding and early care along with education initiatives. The plan builds a healthy workforce by increasing the availability of healthy foods and beverages in worksites.
- The **EMPower Training Initiative** is co-created and implemented by Abt Associates, the Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute (CGBI) and Population Health Improvement Partners. By providing skills-based competency training on these practices, hospitals and maternity care centers can better ensure that related policies and procedures are implemented safely, as intended, for each mother and her infant. There are 2 Alaska hospitals participating in the EMPower Training Initiative.

## Your State Breastfeeding Coalition

The USBC is affiliated with breastfeeding coalitions in all 50 states that carry out activities at state/local levels.

### Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition

The Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition's mission is to provide leadership through collaboration and education to improve the health and well-being of Alaskans by promoting, protecting, and supporting breastfeeding. In particular, the Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition has supported WIC personnel in their pursuit of increased breastfeeding rates among WIC clients, and organized and hosted an annual Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition Educational Conference for 20 years. We are ready to work with you to support and protect breastfeeding families in Alaska and on the national level!

[www.alaskabreastfeeding.com](http://www.alaskabreastfeeding.com)