

2023-2024

# BIRTH AND BREASTFEEDING HEALTH EQUITY AND JUSTICE PROJECT

PROJECT REPORT



# PROJECT OVERVIEW

## TIMELINE

January 1, 2023-December 31, 2024

## AWARD AMOUNT

\$400,000

## FUNDING PARTNER

W.K. Kellogg Foundation



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# ABOUT SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN IBCLCS OF COLOR (SEMI)

Southeast Michigan IBCLCs of Color (SEMI) is a Black-led, community-based organization, working to create an evidence-based, equity-focused comprehensive model of care in order to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding. SEMI centers equity and justice in a truly sustainable way, supporting the families of Southeast Michigan from the inside out. Current systems do not support birth and breastfeeding equity and significant harm has been done to communities of color, resulting in lower breastfeeding rates and health disparities. SEMI reflects and represents the families they serve, reaching families that otherwise would not have access to skilled birth and breastfeeding support. Keeping resources within Southeast Michigan ensures that time, money, and relationships stay local, meeting the needs of the community and establishing an equitable framework that positively impacts birth and breastfeeding outcomes.

**SEMI's mission is to meet the unique needs for mentorship, fellowship and professional growth of IBCLCs of Color in the Southeast Michigan region in order to supply our community with equitable access to culturally appropriate lactation support and advocacy.**



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# ABOUT MICHIGAN BREASTFEEDING NETWORK (MIBFN)

Michigan Breastfeeding Network (MIBFN) advocates, educates, and community-builds alongside families and organizations for the advancement of an equitable, just, and breastfeeding-supportive culture. **We collaborate with organizations and individuals to bring about actionable, system-level changes that are centered on the diverse experiences of Michigan families with young children.**

We envision human milk feeding supporters of every identity serving in solidarity with Black, Indigenous, and other marginalized folx, dismantling unjust and inequitable systems of oppression – white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism. We envision geographic and identity coalitions across Michigan in every community. And, to that end, we are working to support folx that have the skills and lived experience in the reclamation of traditional practices that were stolen from Black and Indigenous families, ensuring a community support model that is grounded in sisterhood and collaboration, making sure that entities are equipped for the long-term, and leading advocacy efforts rooted in community need that are driven by Local Breastfeeding Supporters. **We provide breastfeeding support to organizations by offering strategic guidance, fiscal management, consulting services, community-rooted development, advocacy and leadership, communications and marketing, assistance with continuing education application management, presenting, and fiscal sponsorship.**



**“OUR WORK SERVING ALONGSIDE SEMI WAS A LIVING TESTIMONY TO WHAT’S POSSIBLE WHEN BLACK AND BROWN BIRTH AND BREASTFEEDING LEADERS ARE TRUSTED TO GUIDE SOLUTIONS ROOTED IN COMMUNITY WISDOM. AS COMMUNITY BUILDING MANAGER, I WITNESSED THE TRANSFORMATION THAT HAPPENS WHEN WE MOVE AT THE SPEED OF TRUST, CENTER LIVED EXPERIENCE, AND BUILD POWER WITH – NOT FOR – THOSE MOST IMPACTED. THIS PROJECT WASN’T JUST ABOUT OUTCOMES; IT WAS ABOUT LIBERATION IN ACTION.”**

**-JENNIFER DAY, IBCLC, FORMER MIBFN  
COMMUNITY BUILDING PROJECT MANAGER**



# BUILDING THE BONES: BEHIND-THE-SCENES PLANNING AND COORDINATION

At the heart of our work is the belief that strong systems are essential for sustaining collective care. Through dedicated project management support, we deepened SEMI's organizational roots and enhanced coordination across its many service models. This phase of the project focused on building internal infrastructure that reflects SEMI's values - collaboration, transparency, and community ownership. From transitioning to Black-woman-owned technology platforms to establishing clear roles, systems, and workflows, we took critical steps to ensure SEMI's work is grounded, sustainable, and ready to grow.



Applied for SEMI to become a federally recognized 501(c)(3)



Established all organizational documents, including policies/procedures, bylaws, etc.



Transitioned from founding membership to a working board



Facilitated weekly leadership team meetings



Established SEMI's documentation on Mahmee, a Black-woman-owned platform



Coordinated personal protection equipment and breastfeeding supplies distribution



Created an online appointment request webpage for individual consults



Implemented a tracking spreadsheet for all client visits/consults



Equitably distributed member roles and responsibilities among SEMI members



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# FUELING INNOVATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED LACTATION SUPPORT

Born from SEMI's vision and rooted in community need, Mama's Mobile Milk (MMM) transformed from an internal service to an independent, volunteer-powered LLC during this grant period. With support from MIBFN, legal structure, and relationship-building, MMM began driving forward a new model of care - mobile, responsive, and powered by collective love.

This grant made it possible to:

- Create systems and processes for MMM to be in compliance
- Build out a team of volunteers to transport milk
- Hire an attorney to review contracts
- Procure insurance
- Provide trainings for Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC)
- Establish a contract and work flow with MDOC



## WHAT IS MAMA'S MOBILE MILK?

MMM is a compassionate human milk transport service dedicated to supporting lactating parents who are separated from their babies. In a groundbreaking partnership with the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC), MMM recently received a State of Michigan budget allocation to transport milk from Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility to infants whose parents are incarcerated. This innovative effort ensures that even in the face of separation, babies can continue to receive the vital nutrition, immune protection, and connection that human milk provides - honoring the bond between parent and child and advancing health equity for some of Michigan's most marginalized families.



# CENTERING BLACK VOICES: SEMI'S DOCUMENTARY PREMIERE

In 2024, SEMI debuted its first-ever documentary, *Changing the Face of Lactation Support: If Not Us, Then Who?*, honoring the lived experiences, leadership, and legacy of Black birth and lactation workers in Southeast Michigan. The screening was held at Artist Village Detroit - a vibrant, community-centered space that reflects the heart of SEMI's work.



THE DOCUMENTARY AND SCREENING CREATED SPACE TO BE SEEN, HEARD, AND CELEBRATED. IT REMINDED US THAT WHEN WE CENTER BLACK VOICES IN STORYTELLING, WE SHIFT CULTURE, BUILD TRUST, AND MOVE CLOSER TO JUSTICE.





**“WE ARE PROUD TO EXPAND  
OUR REACH AND SERVE  
INCARCERATED MOTHERS IN  
MICHIGAN THROUGH OUR NEW  
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF  
CORRECTIONS. THIS PROGRAM  
REPRESENTS YEARS OF  
ADVOCACY AND PERSEVERANCE,  
AND IT’S A SIGNIFICANT STEP  
FORWARD IN ENSURING THAT  
ALL FAMILIES, REGARDLESS OF  
THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES, HAVE  
ACCESS TO HUMAN MILK.”**

**-ANGELENE LOVE, BS, DOULA, CBS,  
MAMA'S MOBILE MILK CEO**

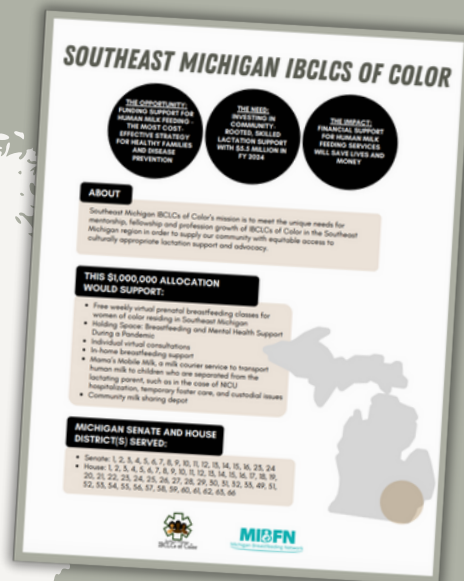


# CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATORS FOR ADVOCACY AND INVESTMENT IN HUMAN MILK FEEDING SUPPORT

In April 2023, a bold and compassionate vision took root: to make Mama's Mobile Milk (MMM) a state-supported service that ensures babies separated from their lactating parents - due to incarceration - can still receive the life-giving nourishment of human milk. This vision was made possible through years of quiet, persistent groundwork. MIBFN had been nurturing relationships with key legislators long before a budget opportunity emerged - serving in solidarity with SEMI, showing up consistently, and championing an approach rooted in trust, equity, and shared purpose. These relationships became foundational when the moment arrived to advocate for a state budget allocation.

In deep collaboration with SEMI, MIBFN:

- Met with legislators to talk about SEMI in each legislative district that SEMI covers to talk about their work
- Shaped the plan to include MMM in the State of Michigan budget - developing a thoughtful work plan and budget, engaging in strategic conversations with leaders like Senator Erika Geiss, and coordinating closely with MDOC
- Participated in monthly meetings with MDOC and bi-weekly planning sessions with SEMI, all without compensation from the state.



**THIS INTENTIONAL LABOR IN SOLIDARITY WITH MMM REFLECTS MIBFN'S CONTINUOUS COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE AND THE BELIEF THAT ESPECIALLY DURING INCARCERATION, THE BOND BETWEEN PARENT AND BABY MUST TO BE PROTECTED.**



**“THE SUPPORT OF MIBFN –  
PARTICULARLY THE ADVOCACY  
OF THEIR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
SHANNON MCKENNEY-SHUBERT  
AND FUND DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGER VICKI WOOD – WAS  
VITAL IN ASSISTING US  
THROUGH THE EARLY  
NEGOTIATIONS WITH MDOC.  
MIBFN’S POLICY PRIORITIES  
AROUND INCARCERATION  
PROVIDED A FOUNDATION FOR  
OUR GOAL OF BRINGING MAMA’S  
MOBILE MILK TO THE PARENTS  
AT HURON VALLEY, AND WE ARE  
GRATEFUL FOR THEIR  
PARTNERSHIP IN THIS WORK.”**

**-TAMEKA JACKSON-DYER, BASC, IBCLC, CHW,  
SEMI CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



# ROOTED IN PARTNERSHIP, GROWING IN PURPOSE

SEMI's deepening relationship with Birth Detroit is a reflection of shared values and a commitment to community-led care. Through intentional coordination and trust-building, SEMI became the primary lactation provider for all Birth Detroit clients, co-creating a service model grounded in love, consistency, and access. With the support of this grant, they were able to have meetings to lay the groundwork for formalized contracts and streamlined referrals. SEMI's leadership also extended beyond local collaborations - Angelene Love, BS, elevated this work nationally by presenting on MMM at conferences, including the 2024 US Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) Conference.

## ABOUT BIRTH DETROIT

Birth Detroit Birth Center is the first and only community freestanding birth center in the city of Detroit. They are a Black-led, midwifery, maternal health practice. They offer birthing services, wellness care, prenatal/postpartum care, and classes to support families' journeys.



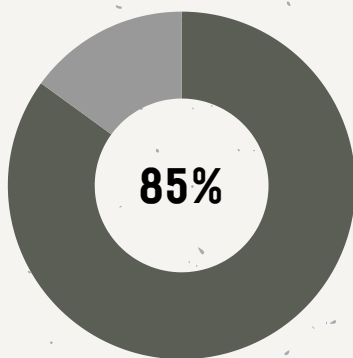
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# COMMUNITY-CENTERED COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING

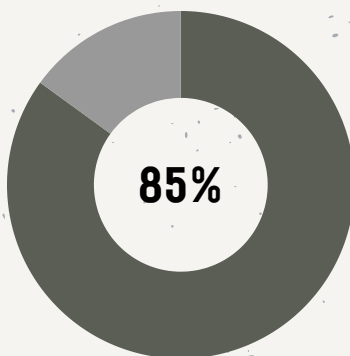
Listening to human milk feeding families - and making sure their stories shape how we show up and serve - is at the heart of our work. During this grant period, we co-created and implemented a data plan rooted in community experience, including a patient satisfaction survey, client data management tools, an external-facing grant report, and systems to gather and reflect on what we learned. At the same time, our communications efforts helped bring SEMI's story to life - through social media amplification and this final report.

## PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

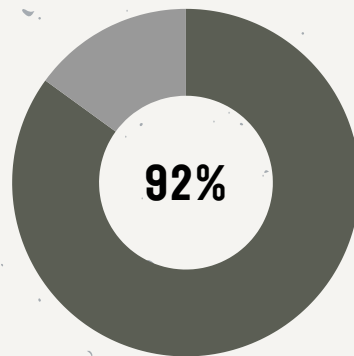
Surveys were launched several months into the project, which limited our response rate. Of the 70 surveys sent, we received 3 bounce-backs and 13 responses - giving us a 19.4% response rate. Most families simply received the survey too long after care. We've now made it standard to drop the link into virtual chats and offer a QR code for in-person consults to increase future participation.



rated quality of SEMI's care as **excellent**



said that SEMI was **very responsive**



said that **SEMI helped them meet their feeding goals**

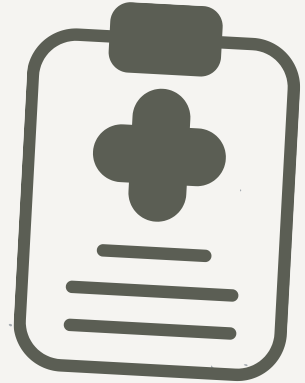


**“THROUGH SEMI, I ATTENDED THE BREASTFEEDING CLASS WITH MY HUSBAND, RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM LATRINA, AND GOT A DONATION FROM THE COMMUNITY MILK SHARING DEPOT. ALL OF THESE RESOURCES MADE MY PREGNANCY AND POSTPARTUM JOURNEY SMOOTHER.”**

**- SEMI CLIENT**

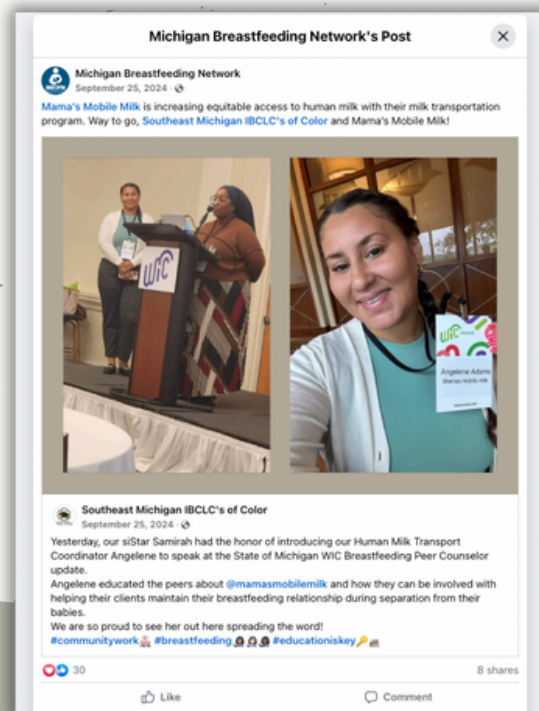
## CO-CREATION OF SEMI DATA MANAGEMENT TOOLS

SEMI and MIBFN co-developed a reporting tool to track client interactions and organize service data in one centralized system. This collaborative effort strengthened care coordination, supported clear and consistent communication, and helped ensure families received high-quality, seamless support throughout the grant period.



## AMPLIFICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

SEMI's vibrant and community-rooted social media presence was a key strength throughout this project. MIBFN amplified SEMI's content - highlighting their offerings, programs, and events - to help broaden the reach of their message via our international-reaching social media efforts. This intentional digital amplification wasn't just about visibility; it was about culture-shifting. By centering Black-led care and lived experience online, we helped build a more just, equitable, and breastfeeding-supportive culture - one post, story, and share at a time.



**“WITHOUT SEMI AND SEKEITA I WOULDN'T HAVE LASTED A WEEK OF BREASTFEEDING. I WAS THE FIRST IN MY FAMILY TO BREASTFEED FOR THE LAST 3/4 GENERATIONS. MY GOAL WAS TO MAKE IT TO HIS SECOND BIRTHDAY AND WE ARE STILL GOING 22 MONTHS STRONG. I'M ETERNALLY GRATEFUL FOR THIS WONDERFUL ORGANIZATION.”**

**- SEMI CLIENT**

# STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Behind the scenes, MIBFN served as a steady and strategic partner in stewarding the financial and administrative foundation that made this work possible. From managing monthly disbursements to supporting SEMI's long-term sustainability, we held grant stewardship as a shared responsibility rooted in care, clarity, and collaboration. Our partnership extended far beyond paperwork - together, we co-created funding proposals, advocated with decision-makers, and laid the groundwork for future growth that reflects SEMI's values and vision. This work wasn't just about securing dollars - it was about resourcing Black-led systems of care for the long haul.



Served as fiscal sponsor for all SEMI projects through grant period



Processed SEMI invoices and ensured timely payment to team



Collaborated on writing MMM into the state budget with MDOC and Senator Erika Geiss



Co-wrote and secured a \$75,000 grant for the Community Milk Sharing Depot



Co-created a fund development plan and met with potential funders



Provided monthly financial reports to support SEMI's internal accounting



Secured a \$1,000 sponsorship to support Holding Space facilitators

## WHAT IS HOLDING SPACE?

Holding Space: Breastfeeding & Mental Health Support Group is a virtual, community-rooted space available to families of color across Michigan. It offers a blend of culturally aligned support, including one-on-one care from IBCLCs, CLCs, and mental health professionals, alongside interactive sisterhood that nurtures connection, healing, and shared wisdom.

**“THIS GROUP HELPED ME  
DURING THE HARDEST  
TRANSITION OF  
BREASTFEEDING... HAVING  
A COMBINATION OF A  
LACTATION CONSULTANT  
AND A THERAPIST IS SO  
NEEDED!”**

**-SEMI CLIENT**



# **THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT, W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION!**

We are deeply grateful for your support, which made it possible for SEMI to strengthen and grow systems of care that center Black families and honor the power of human milk feeding. Because of this grant, we were able to build critical infrastructure as we move toward a more connected and sustainable future. This investment not only helped us meet families where they are - it affirmed that our work matters. Thank you for believing in us and for walking alongside us in this journey.

