

Los Angeles County
African American Infant and
Maternal Mortality (AAIMM)
Prevention Initiative

A HEALTHY AND JOYOUS BIRTH TAKES A VILLAGE



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About The Initiative

This report provides an overview of the Los Angeles County African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (AAIMM) Prevention Initiative, as well as highlights of its collective work from its launch in November of 2018 through November of 2021. Although there is so much more detail that goes into each component of the AAIMM Prevention Initiative, this overview provides a comprehensive look into work done to date as well as the work that lies ahead. We hope that you will find inspiration to take action by reading this document, and will join us in our efforts to end birth inequity by advancing healthy and joyous births for Black* families in Los Angeles County.

The Los Angeles County African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (AAIMM) Prevention Initiative is a coalition of the Department of Public Health in partnership with First 5 LA and the LA County Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, community organizations, mental and health care providers, funders, and community members. We are united in one purpose: to address the unacceptably high rates of Black infant and maternal deaths countywide and ensure healthy and joyous births for Black families in LA County. Through a series of comprehensive coordinated strategies, we aim to reduce the gap in infant mortality rates by 30% by 2023.

The Initiative launched in 2018, spurred by the LA County Department of Public Health's 5-Year Plan to address the racial disparity in infant mortality in Los Angeles County, in partnership with First 5 LA. A fellowship funded by the Pritzker Foundation also seeded the effort, informed by emergent research and focus groups of over 100 Black women. Later, in 2019, Black maternal mortality was added to the initiative's efforts of focus.

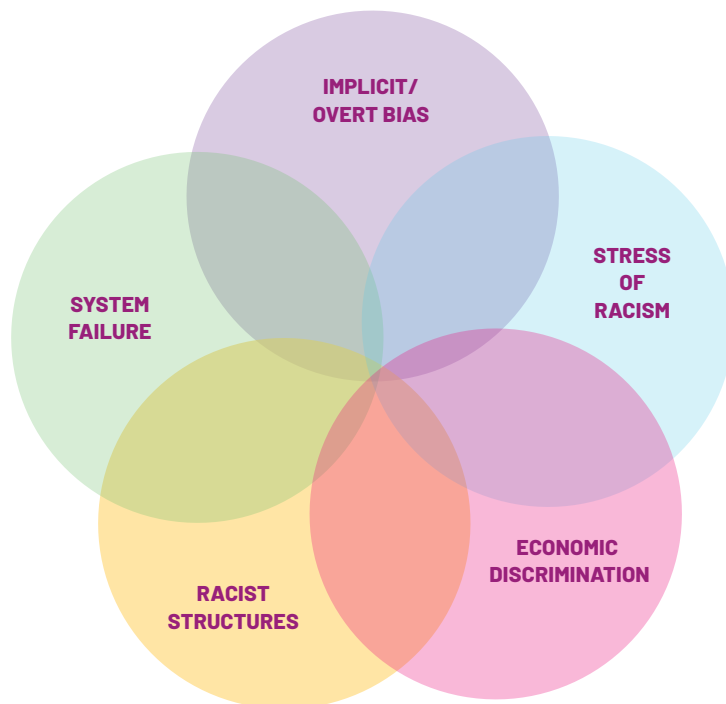
*Please note: The terms Black/African American are used both together and interchangeably, as are women/mamas/birthing people.

The Crisis

- Black/African American babies in LA County are two to three times more likely to die before their first birthday than babies of other races.
- Black/African American women in LA County are four times more likely to die as a result of pregnancy complications than women of other races.
- Harmful stress from the trauma and affront of racism and prejudices that Black women face daily is a root cause. This is more nuanced than the average daily stress that a non-BIPOC person encounters and must be addressed systemically.
- Economic inequality in employment, housing, health care access, and persistent barriers to economic opportunity, as well as the removal of assets from Black communities and families is a factor. Median household assets for Black families in the US is \$138,060, compared to \$929,840 for White families. 18.8% of Black people in the US are in poverty, compared to 10.5% of White people.



2-3X



The AAIMM Prevention Initiative approaches its work from a frame that the root cause of the problem is the stress caused by a Black person's exposure to racism and the impact of that stress on a Black woman/ birthing person's body, compounded by structures in society that perpetuate racism of culturally competent care, and the presence of implicit and overt bias in the systems of support that impact Black families.

The Plan

The plan challenges prevailing explanations that have for decades inadequately defined the reasons for African American/Black infant and maternal mortality, which tend to place blame on individuals. It instead highlights a cascade of events as explanation for birth outcome inequality, including:

1. Black women's exposure to racism and associated social stressors
2. Racially-mediated stress results in physiological stress
3. Excessive stress results in adverse health outcomes

The following are four strategies and sub-strategies of focus called out in the Plan to address AAIMM:

I. Strategy 1:

Reduce women's exposure to stressors in the social environment.

- Public awareness campaign
- Implicit bias and other health care provider training
- Social Determinants of Health: Earned Income Tax Credit, paid family leave, housing

II. Strategy 2:

Block the pathway from social stress to physiological stress.

- Doula support
- Group prenatal care

III. Strategy 3:

Intervene as early as possible if and when stress has taken a toll on health.

- Preconception and post partum care
- Clinical prevention of preterm birth: 17p, low-dose aspirin

IV. Strategy 4:

Create infrastructure required to achieve Strategies 1 through 3.

- Establish countywide Steering Committee and Community Action Teams to guide implementation
- Build data capacity, plans for evaluation of each project
- Build constituency, including the public, policymakers, funders, media, and clinicians

The Solutions

We believe we can stop this injustice by working together to ensure that Black women have access to safe and joyous births.

- Quality health care delivered with respect and dignity
- Sister circles and prenatal groups providing encouragement and support
- Mommy visits at home
- Connection to resources and programs
- Birthing coaches and advocates
- Laws that place power in the hands of families and address unfair treatment
- Birth plans and a way of supporting and advancing them

Our Shared Values



**RACISM
IS THE
ROOT CAUSE**



**BLACK WOMEN
UP FRONT
AND LEADING**



**FOSTERING
EQUITY WHILE
FIGHTING
INEQUITY**

FOR BLACK WOMEN
OF ALL SOCIO-ECONOMIC
BACKGROUNDS

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

ANTI-RACISM,
ANTI-IMPLICIT BIAS



**PIECES OF
THE PUZZLE**

EVERYONE
HAS A ROLE

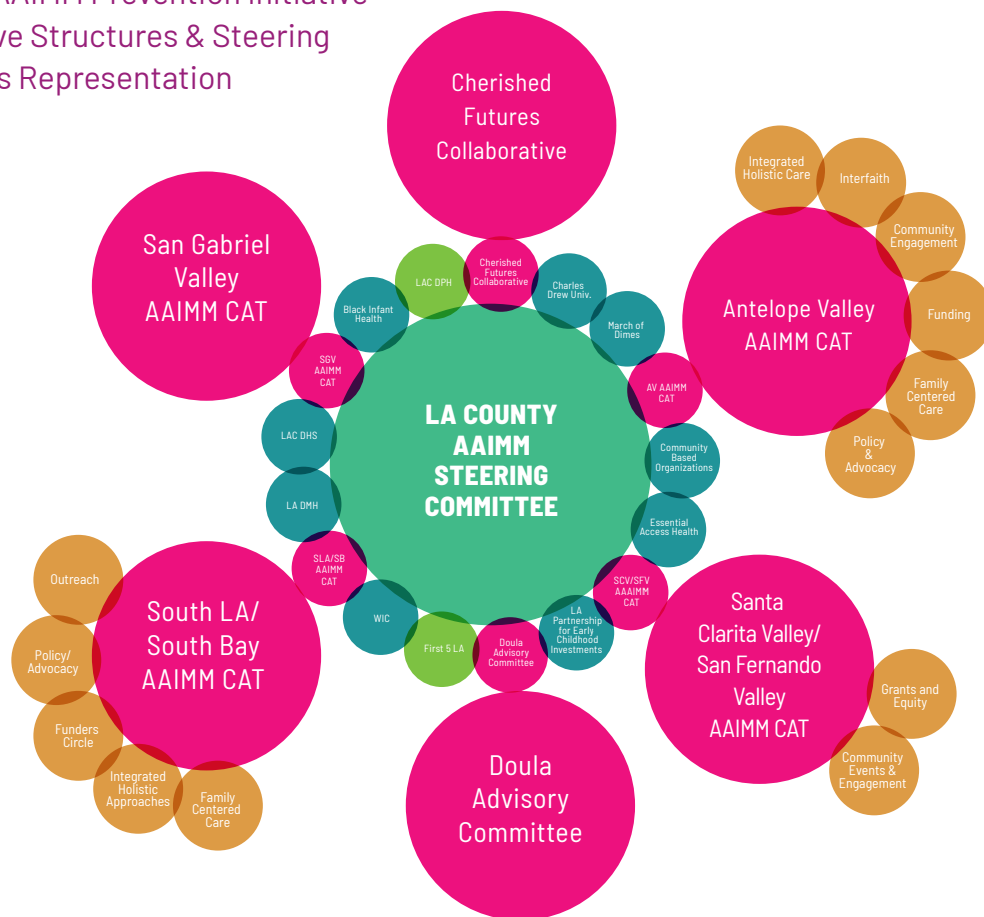


**NO BLAME
GAME**

BIRTH OUTCOMES
ARE A RESULT
OF SYSTEMIC ISSUES,
NOT AN INDIVIDUAL
WOMAN'S CHOICES

The Advocates

LA County AAIMM Prevention Initiative Collaborative Structures & Steering Committees Representation



The AAIMM Steering Committee guides the implementation of the LA County Department of Public Health's 5-Year Action plan to address African American and infant mortality as well as informs the development and implementation of strategies to complement the plan. This group also comes together to advance advocacy, awareness and policy change.

The purpose of the AAIMM Community Action Teams is to create a community and local government partnership to address AAIMM in Service Planning Areas throughout the County and to identify gaps in services and resources to support the reduction of Black infant and maternal mortality rates through community engagement; health, mental and social service providers; clinicians; non-profits; faith-based organizations; funders, and more. Service Planning Areas (SPAs) include: 1 (Antelope Valley), 2 (Santa Clarita/San Fernando Valley), 3 (San Gabriel Valley/Pasadena), and 6/8 (South LA/South Bay) – those areas of the County with the highest rates of African American infant mortality. These SPAs have already begun bringing together community members and community organizations to build awareness of this crisis and determine collective solutions.

Strategies and Anchor Efforts

I. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is comprised of individuals who also work for and with other organizations that are involved in their own work to support Black infant and maternal health. AAImm is supportive of their efforts as collaborative partners. You will find some of these organizations and their accomplishments and contributions highlighted throughout this overview.

a. AAImm Steering Committee Member Organizations Include:

- Antelope Valley Partners for Health
- Antelope Valley WIC
- Black Infant Health/Children's Bureau
- Black Infant Health/City of Long Beach
- Black Women for Wellness
- California Black Women's Health Project
- Charles Drew University
- Department of Health Services (DHS)
- Department of Mental Health (DMH)
- Department of Public Health (DPH)
- Essential Access Health
- First 5 LA
- Growth Mindset Communications
- Healthy African American Families
- iDream for Racial Health Equity
- LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment
- March of Dimes
- Northeast Valley Health Corp.
- PHFE WIC
- Project Joy
- Southern California Public Health Alliance
- Therapeutic Play Foundation
- WIC

Strategies and Anchor Efforts

b. Steering Committee Members Contributions & Accomplishments:



Contributions:

- Fundraising

Accomplishments:

- Secured over \$1M in private dollars for AAIMM and almost \$600K in public dollars.
 - Helped to leverage an additional \$1.5M in private funding to AAIMM orgs (\$900K to CDU from Hilton Foundation, \$150K to Black Women for Wellness (BWW) for backbone from Reissa, another \$150K to an organization yet to be selected, and approximately \$300K to Cherished Futures and BWW from Ballmer Group).
-



Contributions:

- Funding and Communications

Accomplishments:

- AAIMM Communications development to highlight the impact of racism on birth outcomes, and to empower Black birthing folks to breastfeed/chestfeed.
 - Increased funding to support enhanced communication strategies.
-

Charles Drew
Universities
Black Maternal
Health Center
for Excellence
(BMHCE)

Contributions:

- AAIMM Academic Partner supporting Black maternal health research, workforce development, and community-based care and education

Accomplishments:

- Creating a community-based maternal health center that provides free services and education, including group prenatal in support of the DPH Perinatal Equity Initiative effort (in process). This center will serve as a learning lab for AAIMM and a place of belonging and support for Black birthing women in the County.
- Working collaboratively to make midwifery care more accessible and sustainable across the state, amongst other efforts.

Strategies and Anchor Efforts



Contributions:

- Mental Health Outreach, Education, and Advocacy with focus on maternal health and early childhood interventions

Accomplishments:

- Funded by Doterra to address the wellness of mothers through the Mommy Matters program.
- Currently have 15 mamas receiving mental health, occupational therapy, and doula services through their program.
- Funded by DMH and Kaiser to address toxic stress and ACEs that impact Black family wellness.
- Monthly outreach events ending with a community awards gala in February 2020
- Documentary series to decrease stigma around accessing mental health in Black families was funded by Kaiser and they will be going on a trip to Ghana in December for final filming of footage of a healing ceremony to address ancestral trauma with the Black Mental Health Task Force coalition.

A A I M M Doula Program

Contributions:

- Provide free doula support to Black birthing people countywide

Accomplishments:

- Connected over 500 families with doula support since 2019.
- Has seen an increase in community knowledge about doula support and breastfeeding rates.

Strategies and Anchor Efforts



Contributions:

- Offers a variety of services to mothers, including affordable health care, individualized care coordination, prenatal classes, breastfeeding consultations, hospital tours, and more.



Contributions:

- Statewide SRH organization
- Administrator of California's Title X Family Planning Services Program

Accomplishments:

- Presenting at the Title X Grantee Conference — elevating the issue and identifying strategies to improve, enhance, and strengthen encounters with patients.
- Elevating and supporting advocacy efforts.
- Developing and conducting training as part of the PEI initiative.



Contributions:

- Provides WIC Services

Accomplishments:

- Initiated a Council On Racial Equity (CORE) team.
- Convened meetings with Leadership, AA staff, and all staff that included Racial Equity Self Paced Modules.

Strategies and Anchor Efforts



Contributions:

- Advocacy, research, education, programs, and support for families during all stages of pregnancy—even when things do not go as planned.

Accomplishments:

- Funding research to address racial disparities in birth outcomes and root causes
- Community and provider education on birth equity and PTB prevention
- Supporting/sponsoring policies and legislation to advance birth equity and address root causes of racial disparities

Examples:

- Funding Abundant Birth project—guaranteed income project for pregnant women, 2019 CA Birth Equity Summit, co-sponsor of SB65-CA Omnibus Bill, COVID-19 birth plan, Doula in-services on PTB prevention, implicit bias trainings for local hospitals, collaboration with ABWP on PTB awareness and prevention



Contributions:

- Through education, outreach, policy, and advocacy, CABWHP designs and delivers programs focused on changing individual, family, community, and cultural norms around overall health and well-being for California's 1.2 million Black women and girls.

Accomplishments:

- Actively engages in horizontal and vertical advocacy statewide to uplift sacred and joyous Black birth and address disparities in perinatal health outcomes.
- Champions and builds capacity for California's Black birthworker community using its Sister Circle model of engagement to curate safe spaces to share, learn, heal, celebrate, and support birthworkers.
- Produced the Black Birthworker's Toolkit to strengthen the operating, marketing, and business capacity of birthworkers in California.

Strategies and Anchor Efforts

II. Community Action Teams

The AAIMM Community Action Teams (CAT) are regionally-based collaborative partnerships between the Los Angeles County Health Agency, community-based organizations, health care providers, community residents, faith-based organizations, birth workers (doulas, midwives, etc.), allies and community businesses that consult, inform, and engage the community on all AAIMM strategies and create locally-based actions.

Each Community Action Team has various workgroups including Policy, Engagement, Fundraising, Family Centered Models of Care, and more.

There are CATs in the following Service Planning Areas and these are their areas of focus:

a. Service Planning Area 1 - Antelope Valley/Palmdale

Mission:

Ensure the safety and support of African-American moms, babies, and families by providing advocacy, compassion, education, resources, justice, accessibility, and eliminating racial disparities in the community and ensuring access to reliable, unbiased care and support services that maintain equality, honesty, trust, and cultural accountability.

Vision:

AV AAIMM CAT strives to create a safe, empowering, supportive, and culturally aware community for African-American families to make an informed choice. The birth journey, from prenatal to postpartum, will consist of equality, justice, advocacy, mental health services, social support safety and accessibility for all family members involved.

Areas of Focus:

We are focused on educating the community and engaging African American community leaders. We accomplish this through:

- Integrated Holistic Care
- Interfaith Dialogue/Engagement
- Community Engagement
- Funding
- Family-Centered Care

Strategies and Anchor Efforts

Accomplishments to Date:

- Leadership:
 - Backbone agencies, Project Joy & TaVia W. Illes Communications, LLC, established that serve as space holders & gap fillers for several workgroups
 - Creating a community of organizations that are working towards a common goal
- Countywide Policy & Advocacy Committee:
 - TaVia co-leads the group
 - September 2021 training had over 50 participants
- AV Resource Infusion:
 - Prepared Funders' Briefing in September 2021
 - Interest in finding AV AAIMM efforts
- Infrastructure Expansion:
 - Workgroups established and expanded
 - Created regular meeting schedule

Event Highlights:

- Six large AV AAIMM CAT meetings held to date
- Women's History Month—celebrating local SHE-roes
- Black Maternal Health Week 2021
- Family Game Night
- Summertime Outreach
- 2nd Annual "Fathers are Essential" panel

Communications and Marketing:

- Social Media account @AVAAIMM created
- "Take the Pledge" video
- Black Village Directory
- Regular email newsletters

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Strategies and Anchor Efforts

a. Service Planning Area 2 - Santa Clarita/San Fernando Valley

Mission:

Assure trust, empowerment, health education, referrals, and justice for Black families through collaboration and partnerships, striving to eliminate birth inequities and promote structural change in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys.

Vision:

A strong community of Black families and allies who advocate for healing and hope where Black moms and babies in San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys thrive with quality healthcare and necessary resources.

Areas of Focus:

Continue to grow and connect our footprint with African-American Residents in the area. Also, bring resources (via grant opportunities) and bring awareness of the disparity in the region.

Accomplishments to Date:

- Created a platform that has a good level of support
- Created two workgroups: Grants and Community Events
- Participated in a NACCHO Grant
- Was able to bring a panel discussion to discuss COVID-19 in a safe space for African-American families
- Had a donation drive to provide baby supply items to community members to celebrate Black Breastfeeding Week
- Secured a small amount of funding for local work and promotion

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Strategies and Anchor Efforts

a. Service Planning Area 3 - San Gabriel Valley/Pasadena

Areas of Focus:

- Policy, Advocacy & Systems Change
- Community Outreach and Engagement
- Mental Health and Alternative Healing
- Healthcare Providers and Groups
- Funding

Accomplishments to Date:

- Celebrating Black Families event with 119 registrants and 57 attendees
- Black Maternal Health Week event with drive thru/item giveaway had 250 attendees
- Held Juneteenth event with 200 attendees
- Conducted Community Health Needs Assessment interview
- Finalized workgroups
- Finalized launch of the 2022 Black Maternal Mental Health Support Group
- Obtained extension for Kaiser Grant funds
- Partnership with Maternal Mental Health Workgroup, Health Neighborhoods, Black Mental Health TaskForce
- Held Holiday Giveaway which served 180 families and 400 adults

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Strategies and Anchor Efforts

a. Service Planning Area 6 and 8 - South LA/South Bay

Mission:

To reduce African American/Black infant and maternal mortality in South Los Angeles/South Bay by addressing the impact of racism, catalyzing community action, and promoting wellness and equitable healthcare strategies for African American/Black families.

Vision:

We strive to create systemic change to ensure that every African American/Black woman, infant, child, and man lives wholly and thrives; is treated with dignity and respect, and has access to unbiased, humane, and equitable services that support and enhance their health and well-being.

Areas of Focus:

We are focused on addressing systemic and structural racism at the local, state policy level. Hear from our community, pregnant and parenting women, fathers, grandparents, clinicians and maternal health providers, doulas, and midwives on the needs of our community to end African American infant and maternal mortality.

We accomplish this through:

- Community Outreach & Engagement
- Policy & Advocacy
- Funders Circle
- Integrated Holistic Approaches
- Virtual Information and Education on Perinatal Health Topics/Concerns
- Family-Centered Models of Care
- Black Daddy Dialogues

Accomplishments to Date:

Through our collaborative work with community and county departments, and with funders for CAT partner agencies, we have been able to obtain additional funding for support of current programs/CBOs and work around Black Infant and Maternal Health. We have launched/implemented several interventions/strategies (i.e. VirtualiTEA, Black Daddy Dialogues, Black Breastfeeding Week, Media Campaign, The Richardson Review). We helped build the current maternal health workforce, created collaborations that have led to additional job opportunities and promotions for Black/African American folks.

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III. Communications and Awareness

Funded in part by the PEI grant and Doula project funding, Communications efforts are focused on fostering awareness and action around both the disparity, interventions to address it, what families can do, and the role stakeholders have to play in ending it. This initiative's theme of "a joyous and healthy birth takes a village" invites birthing families to activate a village of support and stakeholders to be a village of support to end the disparity.

a. AAIMM Communications Timeline



1. "400 Years is Enough" theme for the year was created to highlight the 400-year anniversary of slaves being brought to the U.S.—tied into racism as the root cause of Black infant and maternal mortality disparities
2. Website launched
3. Social Media launched with Blavity as a co-sponsor



1. "Joyous and Healthy Births Take a Village" theme launched
2. Launch of Black Maternal Health Week campaign
3. Newsletter launched
4. Billboards, social media campaigns, radio ads implemented as outreach tools
5. Groups came together to create a collaborative effort, structure, and build the capacity to communicate AAIMM messaging and theme



1. "Activate Your Village" theme and messaging implemented
2. Black Maternal Health Week campaign launched for 2nd year
3. Black Breastfeeding Week campaign launched
4. NICU Awareness Month campaign launched
5. Prematurity Awareness Month campaign launched

NOTE: For a timeline of all AAIMM Prevention Initiative accomplishments to date, please see Appendix.

Strategies and Anchor Efforts

In 2021, the AAIMM Communications Team created and activated two successful digital campaigns. The first was for Black Maternal Health Week (April 11-17) and the other for Black Breastfeeding Week (August 25-31). Here is more information on each campaign along with stats on impact:

Black Maternal Health Week

AAIMM and its collaborative partners celebrated the County's first officially-recognized Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW) with a digital campaign. The campaign theme was, "Virtual Village Empowerment" and the hashtag used across social media was #WeAreTheVillage. This was the second year that AAIMM participated in a countywide effort to engage people in Black infant and maternal health. However, 2021 showed expansion and growth in the regions that were supported, adding the San Fernando Valley, Santa Clarita, and San Gabriel Valley as part of its Community Action Teams (CATs). The AAIMM CATs – which also include the Antelope Valley and South LA/South Bay – were instrumental in creating the virtual events that took place during BMHW.

Virtual events focused on holistic health and well-being, as well as providing resources and advice, and included daily live Black Women for Wellness Podcast episodes, Kitchen Divas online cooking classes, donations, and panels and conversations on topics ranging from Paid Family Leave to doulas and building one's village of support. The events were the result of extensive community partnership and also included the support of organizations such as March of Dimes, the Los Angeles Public Library, the Department of Public Health, and the LA Regional Food Bank.

In addition to the events, the AAIMM Communications Team—along with collaborative partners from across the network—created a "Tips to Activate Your Village Guide" which was distributed for free online as a downloadable .pdf, and launched a video series on social media entitled, "Dear Baby, When I Love Me, I Love You," which is a journal series

Strategies and Anchor Efforts

made possible by the contributions of mothers who shared their real pregnancy and birthing experiences. A Creative Toolkit of fliers, social media graphics, events calendar, and more was also made available free to download from the campaign hub.

Campaign Objectives:

- Increase awareness and support in the initiative's efforts to end the unjustly high rates of Black infant and maternal deaths in the county.
- Share resources for Black families to improve outcomes for healthy and joyous births

Campaign Impact:

- Over 25 virtual events
- 10,000 people reached
- 44 website sign-ups for volunteer opportunities

Black Breastfeeding Week

This week-long campaign was geared towards spreading awareness of Black Breastfeeding Week (BBFW), which was officially recognized by the LA County Board of Supervisors in June 2021. Co-sponsored by the South LA/South Bay Community Action Team (SLASB AAIMM CAT) – who brought the first BBFW campaign to LA County in 2020 – and the LA County AAIMM Prevention Initiative, “Support/Protect/Welcome Black Breast/Chest Feeding Everywhere” was the theme for the week, with supporting sub-themes around breastfeeding, chestfeeding, and pumping.

The campaign primarily consisted of a digital and social media campaign, sharing images of Black breast/chestfeeding persons taken in iconic Los Angeles locations—including Nappily Naturals, Pucker Up, South LA Cafe, and Grocery Outlet—that are well-known within the African American community. The images served to normalize the feeding of babies in public places and encourage others to share their own breastfeeding journey using the campaign hashtags. Additionally, grassroots efforts were made to spread the word about the campaign via events hosted by AAIMM Community Action Teams, newsletters, a website hub that

Strategies and Anchor Efforts

hosted written content about breast/chestfeeding, billboards placed around the South LA region, and culminated in a Breastfeeding Matters Walk coordinated by and in support of Soul Food For Your Baby, hosted by Black Women for Wellness.

Campaign Objectives:

- Increase safety around breast/chestfeeding in public spaces
- Reduce barriers to safety—including psychological safety/belonging/inclusion around breast/chestfeeding in Los Angeles (images will represent the South LA area)
- Increase awareness and comfort among Black families in Los Angeles County

Campaign Impact:

- 1.1K sessions on the website, an increase of 10% over the prior week
- 18 new website sign-ups during the week (9 of them were volunteers)
- The three campaign billboards had 5,901,355 total estimated impressions
- Twitter
 - Gained 5 new followers compared to the previous week
 - Engagement increased by 13% compared to the same time last year
 - Retweets increased by 50% compared to the same time last year
- Facebook
 - Gained 3 new fans compared to the previous week
 - Engagement decreased by 16% compared to the same time last year (i.e. likes, comments, and shares). However, link clicks increased by 100%, as there were none last year.
- Instagram
 - Gained 25 new followers compared to the previous week
 - Engagement increased by 1% compared to the same time last year
 - Website visits from IG page increased by 8% compared to the same time last year

IV. Perinatal Equity Initiative

The Perinatal Equity Initiative (PEI) was established in the state legislature's Budget Act of 2018 as the California Department of Public Health's response to the alarming statewide gap in Black infant mortality. PEI is designed as a complement to the state's Black Infant Health (BIH) Program, a group-based service, information, and social support program for Black mothers to buffer the negative effects of racism on their health. The goal is to improve birth outcomes and reduce mortality through interventions implemented at the county level that are evidence-based, evidence-informed or reflect promising practices.

As Alameda County's BElovedBIRTH Black Centering program perfectly states, "Group perinatal care by, for, and with Black people is an innovative new program designed to provide culturally attuned and racially concordant care for Black birthing people."

Social Determinants of Health

Disparate outcomes are built into established economic and social structures that determine if and where people work, if and where they are housed, their access to healthy food, affordable transportation, recreation, and safety. PEI funding is currently being used to help AAIMM address the social determinant of financial inequities on Black pregnant peoples' health by providing education and hands-on support for families eligible for Paid Family Leave and Earned Income Tax Credit. There is strong evidence that the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) increases employment and income for participating families and improves birth outcomes. There is also data that shows some families who could benefit the most are not claiming their EITC.[1] They created an EITC public awareness text campaign and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) tax prep events as well as Paid Family Leave (PFL) community training, provided stipends for community support people to assist with PFL, and COVID relief.

Funding from PEI has supported the work of AAIMM through:

- Staffing
- Leading Effective Collaborations training
- CAT-related activities
- Stipends for CAT members
- Steering Committee-related activities
- Steering Committee stipends
- Communications/Media
- Hospital Quality Improvement with Cherished Futures, BFLA and MOD
- The Village Fund
- RBA Scorecard
- Compyle software
- Interventions:
 - Group Prenatal Care with Charles Drew University (CDU)
 - Preconception Health with Emergency Assistance
 - Fatherhood programming
 - Public Awareness campaign
 - Evaluation
 - Trauma Informed training for Doulas
- Print materials
- Necessary travel

Evidence-Based Programs

V. AAIMM Doulas Program

On September 30, 2020 Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Division of Maternal Child and Adolescent Health responded to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), California Home Visiting Projects (CHVP) Request for Supplemental Information (RSI) funded by the \$5M in State General Funds set aside for innovation in Social Determinants of Health BlackInfantsAndFamilies.org home visiting to sustain the African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (AAIMM) Doula Pilot Project. The AAIMM Doula Pilot Project is a part of the broad AAIMM Prevention Initiative to address racism as the root cause of health disparities during the pregnancy and postpartum periods and to reduce infant and maternal mortality.

On November 10, 2020 CDPH issued an award notification for the maximum annual amount of \$1M. The newly funded CHVP AAIMM Doula Program will provide free, culturally congruent doula support to 500 Black/African American pregnant people countywide through June 2023. Priority will be given to the SPA's 1, 6, and 8 (Antelope Valley, South LA, and the South Bay) where Black infant mortality rates are highest. Clients will receive educational, emotional, and physical support from a team of ten (10) experienced Black/African American doulas.

The AAIMM Doula program features 10 African American/Black doulas who are trained professionals who provide physical, emotional and informational support to a laboring person and/or family before, continuously during, and after childbirth to help them achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible.

VI. Black Infant Health Program

The Black Infant Health Program (BIH) was created at the state level as a result of California Senate Bill 165 of the Budget Act of 1989 to address the high rate of infant mortality for African American families. Los Angeles County was among the first health jurisdictions to receive funding from the state to implement a culturally-specific perinatal intervention aimed at reducing the African American infant mortality rate.

Despite a gradual decline in African American infant mortality in LA County since 2007, African American infants continue to die at more than 3 times the rate observed for white and Asian infants, the two racial/ethnic groups with the lowest infant mortality rates.

Evidence-Based Programs

Within a culturally affirming environment and honoring the unique history of African American women, the BIH Program uses a group-based approach with complementary client-centered case management to help women develop life skills, learn strategies for reducing stress, and build social support. BIH clients participate in weekly group sessions (10 prenatal and 10 postpartum) designed to help them access their own strengths and set health-promoting goals for themselves and their babies. In addition to helping clients reinforce the skills and knowledge they develop in the group sessions, one-on-one case management ensures that clients are connected with the appropriate community and social services to meet their needs. Each woman culminates her participation in the program by developing her own individual Life Plan to guide her continued progress after BIH.

VII. Group Prenatal Care

Our Group Prenatal Program, funded by PEI, in partnership with Charles Drew University's Black Maternal Health Center for Excellence provides evidence based group prenatal care from Black community midwives exclusively for Black women/birthing people. As Alameda County's BElovedBIRTH Black Centering program perfectly states, "Group perinatal care by, for, and with Black people is an innovative new program designed to provide culturally attuned and racially concordant care for Black birthing people."

VIII. Fatherhood Initiative

The Fatherhood Initiative promotes the importance of having fathers engaged in the process — bolstering mental, emotional and physical health both during pregnancy and post-delivery. AAIMM's Fatherhood program includes social support in a group atmosphere and technical assistance for service and medical providers to best serve fathers from pregnancy through postpartum. The Expecting Fathers Group for Black Dads helps fathers to become empowered advocates for themselves and their partners. Within a safe space, fathers can learn what to expect in each stage of pregnancy, how to activate a village of support, and how their involvement can lead to a more healthy and joyous birth.

IX. Preconception Health

Preconception and Interconception Care Intervention is designed to intentionally increase women's health by focusing on their ability to make informed decisions about if and when they become pregnant, and their health-affirming behaviors both prior to conception and between pregnancies. Our Preconception Health program aims to promote reproductive health care and pregnancy intention screening as a fundamental, standard component of primary care. It provides technical assistance to clinicians and service providers as well as culturally respectful reproductive health care that centers Black families.

X. The Village Fund

The Village Fund is a public private partnership to support community-led efforts that reinforce the broad goals of the AAIMM Prevention Initiative. In the spirit of "it takes a village to raise a child," the Fund partners with organizations, service providers and networks that provide valuable support and services to Black birthing mothers and their families but are not often on the radar of/funded by foundations and public entities. The Fund is administered by the LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment and capitalized by a combination of public and private philanthropic dollars, inclusive of PEI funding and First 5 LA.

The first cohort of AAIMM Village Fund grantees are:

1. Luna and Sol Yoga
2. Lydia O. Boyd, IBCLC
3. Men Taking Over Reforming Society
4. Mighty Little Giants
5. Parenting for Liberation
6. Project Joy
7. TaVia Iles
8. Youth With A Purpose

XI. Cherished Futures for Black Moms & Babies

Cherished Futures is a multi-sector, collaborative effort supported and aligned with the comprehensive AAIMM Prevention Initiative to reduce infant mortality and improve maternal patient experiences and safety for Black moms and babies in South Los Angeles and the Antelope Valley. An overarching goal is to align hospitals with their responsibility to provide respectful, optimal care, recognizing the social and physical stress of many of their pregnant patients. With sponsorship from Health Net, and as an effort of the Public Health Alliance of Southern California, Cherished Futures unites key decision-makers from local birthing hospitals, public health, health plans, community-based organizations, and advocates to implement systems-change interventions at three levels: clinical, institutional, and community. Cherished Futures also subcontracts with the March of Dimes and BreastfeedLA for Hospital Quality Improvement work through DPH-PEI funding and funding from First 5 LA.

XII. Paid Family Leave (PFL)

In partnership with The California Work & Family Coalition, we have recruited 50 and will train African American parents, healthcare professionals, doulas, faith-based members, and others who provide support and services to Black families in Los Angeles County to provide education and PFL support in their communities. Selected community members will be compensated to share Paid Family Leave information and assist members of their community with applying.

XIII. Earned Income Tax Credit

In partnership with the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, First 5 LA, CAL EITC and the United Way, we have created a public awareness campaign and are providing 30 African American families who are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit with free tax preparation from certified tax preparers.

Impact Summary

I. Implicit Bias and Anti-Racism Trainings of all County Staff

BMHW was brought to LA by Jan (BWW) and myself with my work with DHS WPC in April 2018. It then began to be an annual offering through the CATs in 2019 and to say recognized and a motion passed to recognize by Supervisor Mitchell in 2021. Los Angeles County dedicated significant resources to ensure all staff received an introductory implicit bias training. In partnership with the County's Center for Health Equity, AAIMM offered two in-depth racial equity trainings, with a focus on anti-Black racism and health disparity, for individuals within the AAIMM Prevention Initiative network. All AAIMM Prevention Initiative grantees, contractors, and partner organizations are required to receive implicit bias and/or anti-racism training, or to have completed such trainings.

II. Communications Efforts

The impact of cumulative communications efforts including: website, social media, newsletter, and digital campaigns has resulted in a 40 million+ reach from 2019-2021.

III. Black Maternal Health Week

Black Maternal Health Week (BMHW) was introduced and led nationally by Black Mamas Matter Alliance four years ago and brought to Los Angeles by Black Women for Wellness in collaboration with the Department of Health Services Whole Person Care program in April 2018. In 2019, it was integrated with the AAIMM Community Action Teams' annual efforts. Finally, in 2021, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion recognizing April 11-17 as Black Maternal Health Week and April 16 as The Day of the Black Infant. The motion, brought forward by Holly Mitchell, LA County District 2 Supervisor, was a win for AAIMM, its Steering Committee, and Community Action Teams.

AAIMM and its collaborative partners celebrated the county's first officially-recognized BMHW with over 25 virtual events, a website hub on blackinfantsandfamilies.org, and through various social media efforts. The goal was to increase awareness and support in the initiative's efforts to end the unjustly high rates of Black infant and maternal deaths in the county, as well as to share resources for Black families having access to healthy and joyous births. The theme of the week was "Virtual Village Empowerment," and by the end of the campaign, over 10,000 people were reached and 44 signed up on the website for volunteer opportunities.

AAIMM Funding Sources

Both public and private funding has been allocated to the AAIMM Prevention Initiative in order to implement strategies in an effort to meet our goal of reducing the gap in infant mortality between Black/African American and White populations in LA County by 30% within five years. It is because of this funding that work has been able to proceed.

FUNDING TYPE	FUNDING SOURCES (WHOLE OR PARTIAL) 2018 - PRESENT	ALLOCATION
Federal Block Grant Funds: Passed through by state, other federal funds Note: LA County has significant discretion over the use of these funds. Allocation as described here reflects county prioritization of AAIMM goals.	Maternal and Child Health Block Grant	DPH MCAH Staff Time
	DPSS – CalWORKS Block Grant	Expansion of home visiting services for pregnant and parenting CalWORKS clients and training for home visitors.
	Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting federal and state funds	Perinatal, infant, early childhood Home visiting
	Federal Healthy Start Grant	Federal discretionary grant to DHS for perinatal care coordination, fatherhood support, and community engagement

AAIMM Funding Sources

FUNDING TYPE	FUNDING SOURCES (WHOLE OR PARTIAL) 2018 - PRESENT	ALLOCATION
State Funds: Formula and discretionary grants to DPH Note: LA County has significant discretion over the use of these funds. Allocation as described here reflects county prioritization of AAIMM goals.	Black Infant Health Program (BIH)	Culturally grounded program, resource and referral services for pregnant and parenting Black women in select Service Planning Areas (SPAs)
	Perinatal Equity Initiative (PEI)	Staff, staff training Community engagement (CATs and Steering Committee) Media/Public Awareness Program Services in Geographic Priority Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group prenatal care • Fatherhood programs • Reproductive health care • Village Fund • Cherished Futures for Black Moms and Babies (hospital engagement) • Earned Income Tax Credit & Paid Family Leave
	Comprehensive Perinatal Service Program	Support for enhancement of perinatal medical care through county technical assistance
	Department of Health Services state-funded Whole Person Care (WPC) racial equity/ reproductive justice training grant to DPH	Anti-racism training for county and community AAIMM stakeholders and health care providers

AAIMM Funding Sources

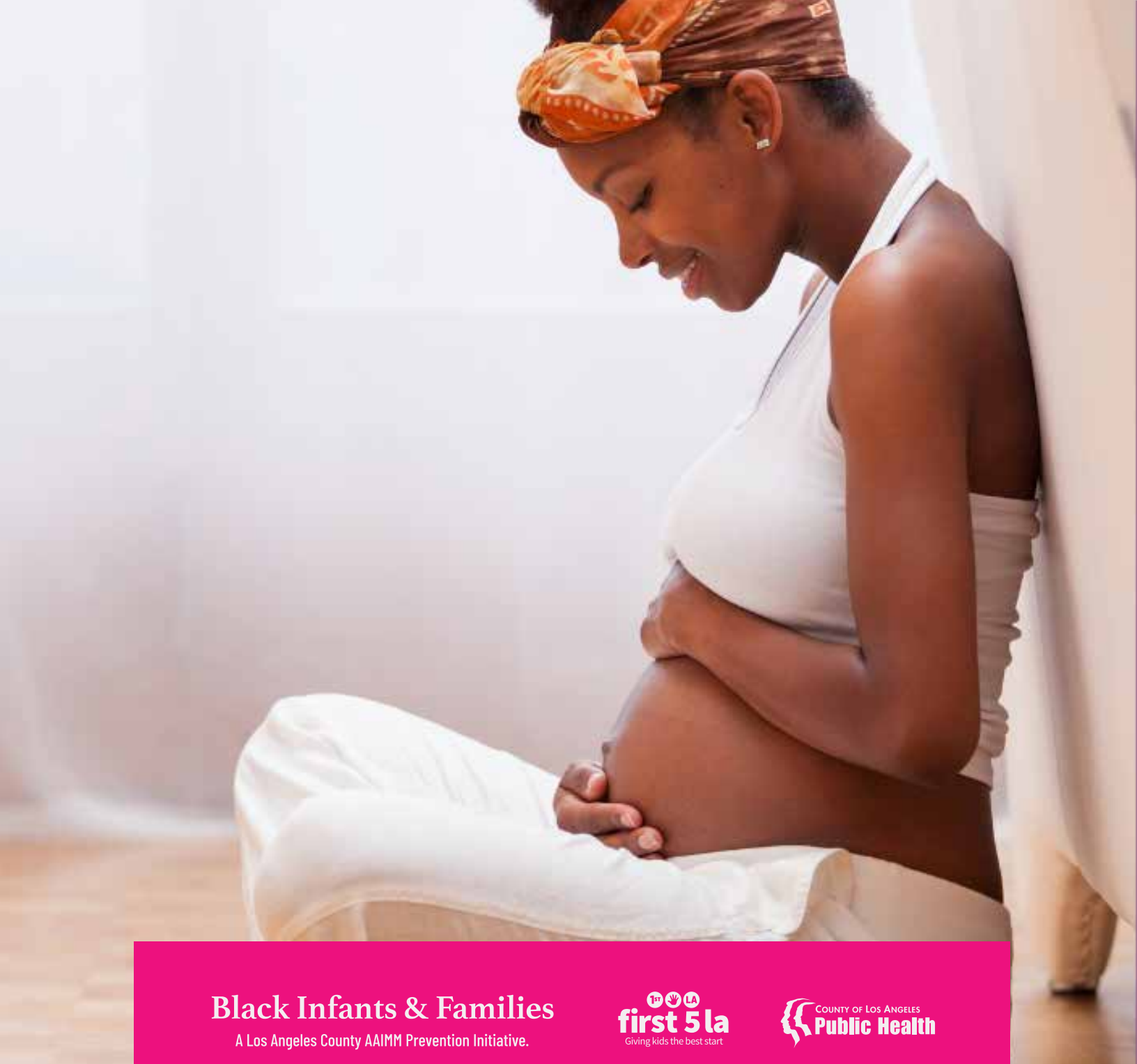
FUNDING TYPE	FUNDING SOURCES (WHOLE OR PARTIAL) 2018 - PRESENT	ALLOCATION
State Funds (con't): Formula and discretionary grants to DPH Note: LA County has significant discretion over the use of these funds. Allocation as described here reflects county prioritization of AAIMM goals.	Department of Health Services state-funded Whole Person Care (WPC) doula pilot program	Supported recruitment and training of new African American doulas, and included stipends for doulas to serve African American women with culturally congruent care as well as staffing of program at DPH
	California Home Visiting Program—Innovation Grant	Ongoing support for staff and services of the previously WPC-funded DPH AAIMM Doula Program
	Department of Mental Health, Health Neighborhood funds	Expansion of perinatal home visitation programs and trainings for home visitors

AAIMM Funding Sources

FUNDING TYPE	FUNDING SOURCES (WHOLE OR PARTIAL) 2018 - PRESENT	ALLOCATION
County General Funds	County Implicit Bias In-Person Training	Training for all County Public Health, Health Services, and Mental Health employees
Public Partners	First 5 LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness media campaign (First 5 LA category: Strategic Communications) • Data support & focus groups • Community Action Team (CAT) backbone support • Evaluation • Cherished Futures • Center of Excellence (First 5 LA category: Emerging Opportunities) • Village Fund (First 5 LA category: AAIMM Innovation Fund) • Advocacy: (First 5 LA category: Stakeholder Engagement and Policy) • AAIMM integration across First 5 LA investments

AAIMM Funding Sources

FUNDING TYPE	FUNDING SOURCES (WHOLE OR PARTIAL) 2018 - PRESENT	ALLOCATION
Private Partners	Reissa Foundation	SPA 6/8 AAIMM CAT backbone support
	LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment	SPA 1 AAIMM CAT backbone support, Village Fund
	Health Net Doula Pilot	Direct service doula care to African American pregnant Health Net Medi-Cal clients. Goal to serve 150 clients in one-year pilot program.
	Pritzker Foundation	Supports AAIMM staff lead at First 5 LA
	Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park	SPA 3 AAIMM CAT funding



Black Infants & Families

A Los Angeles County AAIMM Prevention Initiative.



LA County AAIMM Steering Committee and Community Action Teams :

Antelope Valley
Community Action Team

San Fernando &
Santa Clarita Valleys
Community Action Team

San Gabriel Valley
Community Action Team

South LA/South Bay
Community Action Team

BlackInfantsAndFamilies.org



BlackInfantsAndFamilies



@bif_la



@BlackInfantsAndFamiliesLA

Appendix

AAIMM Chronology of Activities

Funding color key

- Perinatal Equity Initiative (PEI)
- Whole Person Care (WPC) Doula Pilot Project
- California Home Visiting Program (CHVP) Innovation Doula Program
- Hilton Doula Program
- PO = Purchase Order
- COVID-19

2017

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEPT OCT NOV DEC

AAIMM HIGHER starts, priority for DPH

AAIMM Higher Stakeholder Mtg

AAIMM Higher Stakeholder Mtg

2018

● (PEI) ● (WPC) Doula Pilot Project

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEPT OCT NOV DEC

Doula ad hoc Advisory Committee launch

Public Health Week event introducing DPH's Pathway to Equity: A Framework to Close the Black-White Infant Mortality Gap (Dr. Debby Allen).

DPH Health Program Analyst dedicated to AAIMM.

First 5 LA focus groups

Center for Health Equity 5-Year Action Plan planning, community forums through November

Pritzker Fellow hired at First 5 LA

Creation of Community Action Team: South LA/ South Bay

PEI Planning Grant

CHE Action Plan launch

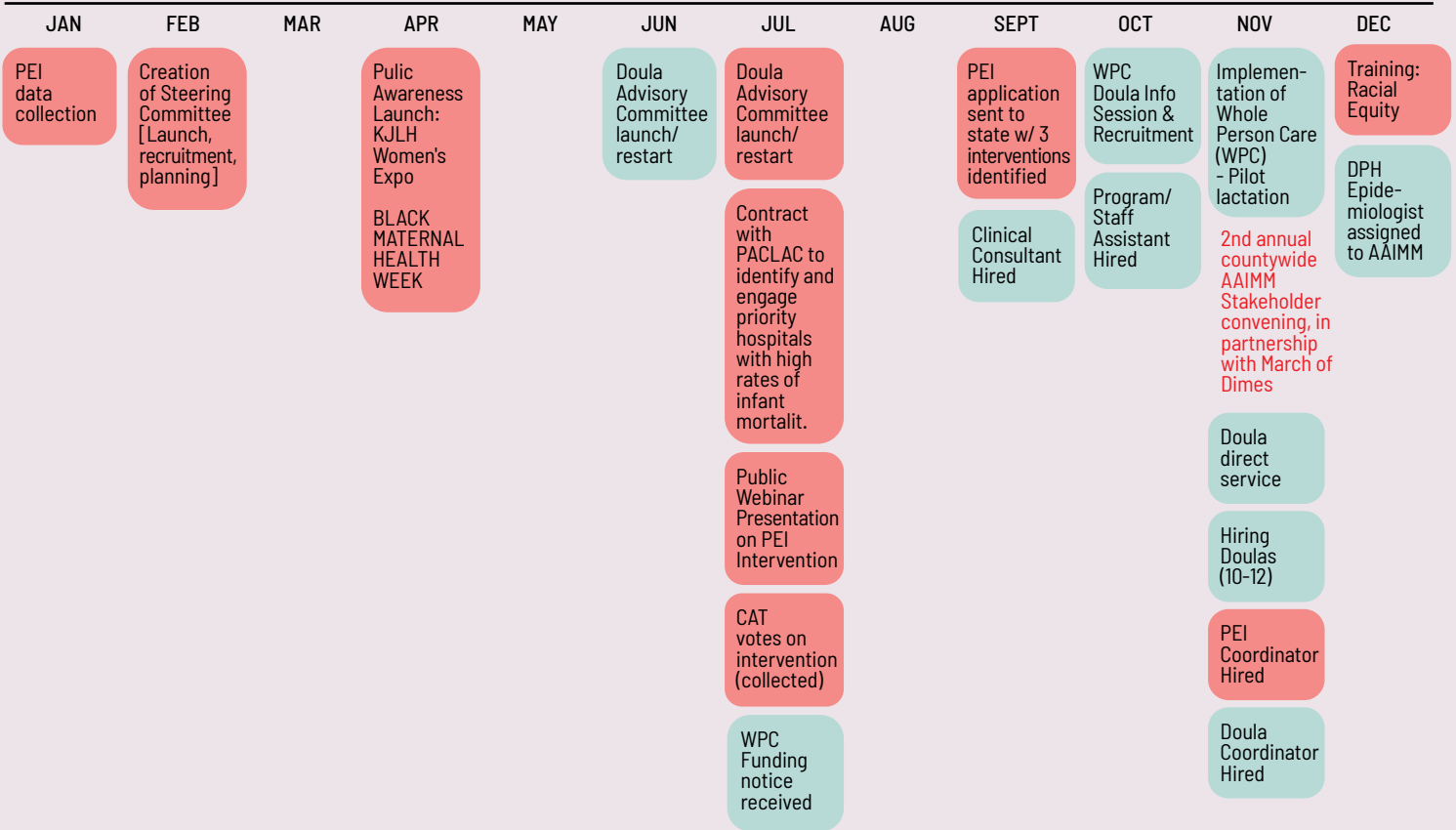
First AAIMM Countywide Stakeholder convening

Appendix

2019

(PEI)

(WPC) Doula Pilot Project



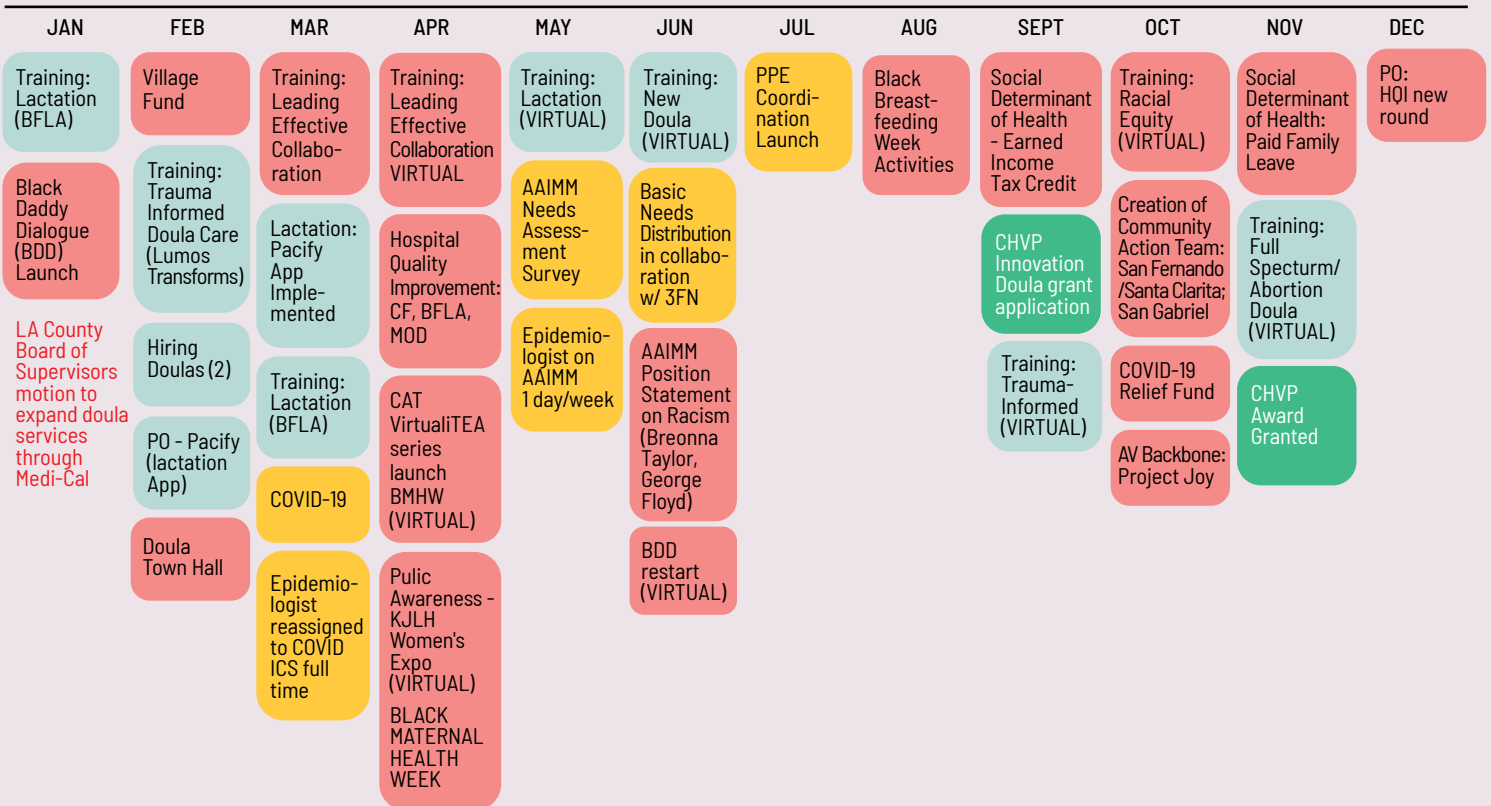
2020

(PEI)

(WPC) Doula Pilot Project

(CHVP) Innovation Doula Program

COVID-19



Appendix

2021

(PEI)

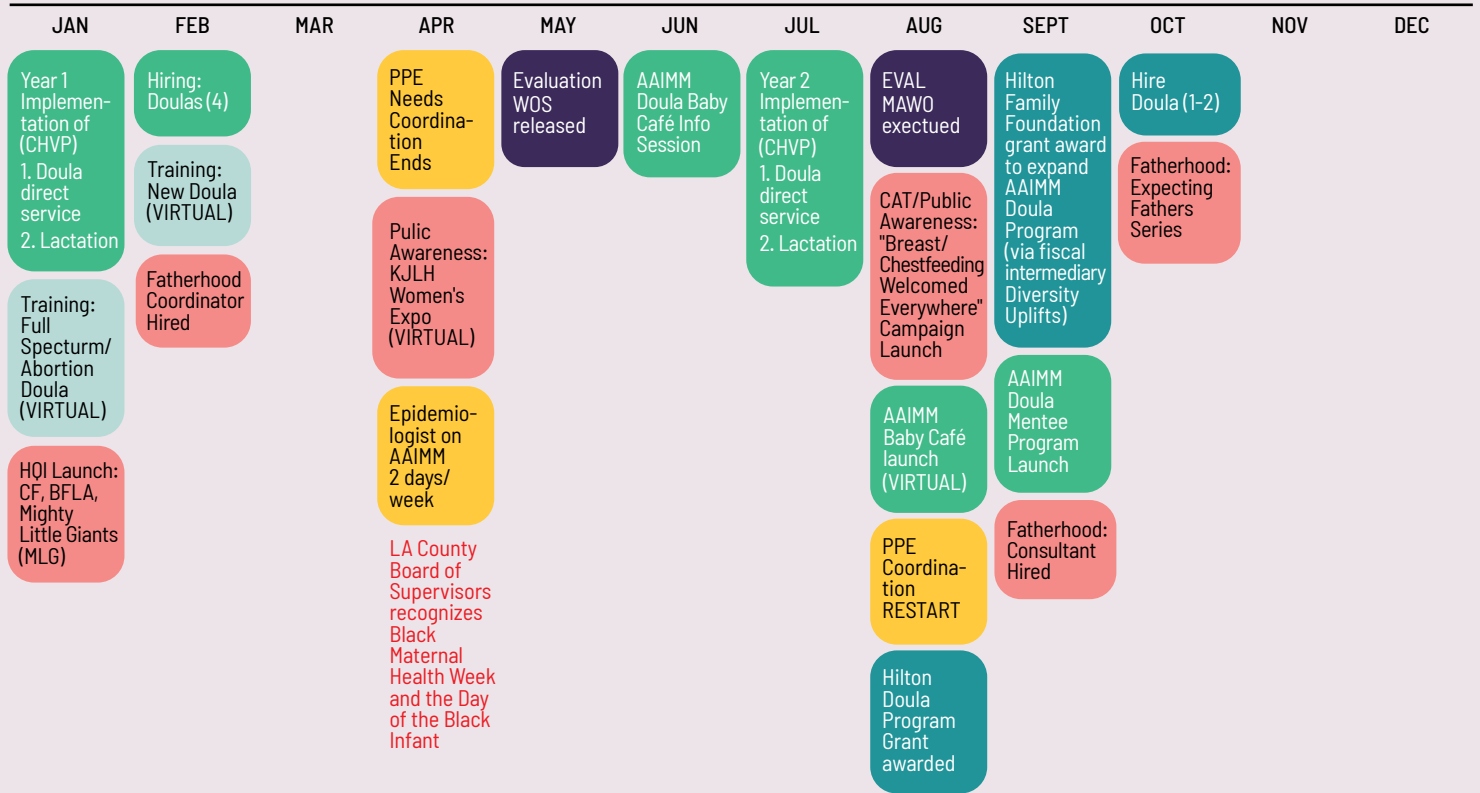
(WPC) Doula Pilot Project

(CHVP) Innovation Doula Program

COVID-19

PO = Purchase Order

Hilton Doula Program



2022

(PEI)

(WPC) Doula Pilot Project

(CHVP) Innovation Doula Program

COVID-19

PO = Purchase Order

Hilton Doula Program

