

# Healthy Communities Strategy

## Breastfeeding Friendly Designations/Awards



### Strategy Purpose

Breastfeeding is the optimal source of nutrition and immune protection for babies and is a source of primary prevention for many infant and maternal conditions. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly states that breastfeeding should no longer be considered a lifestyle choice, but rather a public health imperative because of the many short and long-term benefits to mother and child<sup>1</sup>.

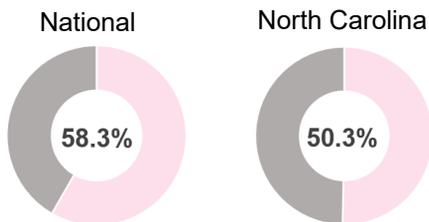
A woman’s ability to initiate and sustain breastfeeding is influenced by a host of factors, including the community in which she lives. Community organizations can help honor a family’s decision to breastfeed by building a breastfeeding-friendly environment. Breastfeeding-friendly designation/award programs provide organizations with guidance on how best to provide setting-specific accommodations for families wanting to breastfeed. North Carolina encourages local health departments (LHDs) to work with businesses, worksites, maternity centers, outpatient clinics, and childcare facilities to provide breastfeeding-friendly accommodations for mothers and families.

### Why is Increasing Breastfeeding Rates Important in North Carolina?

Infants who are breastfed have reduced risks for asthma, obesity, Type 1 diabetes, lower respiratory diseases, and other potential health complications<sup>2</sup>. Considering these potential benefits, North Carolina lags behind the national average in a number of key indicators.

North Carolina ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> among all states in terms of infants who are breastfed at 6 months old<sup>3</sup>.

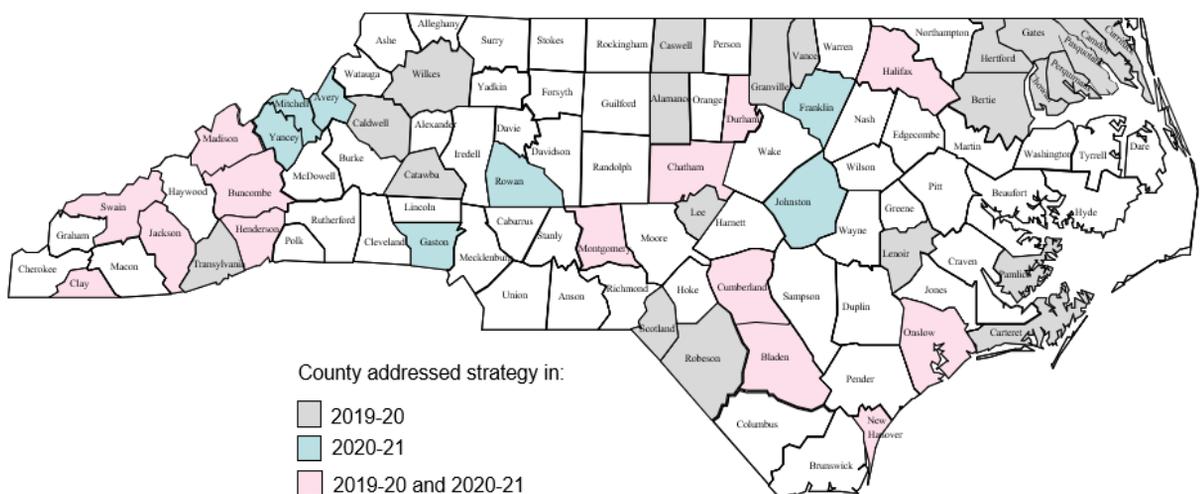
North Carolina’s Maternity Care Centers fall short of the national average on 4 of the 6 indicators for maternity center practices on how babies are fed, and mothers are supported<sup>3</sup>.



Practice	National score	NC score
Immediate Postpartum Care	81	73
Rooming In	71	70
Feeding Practices	82	78
Feeding Education and Support	92	90

### Strategy Participation

In total, 31 District or LHDs covering 43 counties have worked on this strategy from June 2019 to March 2021.



#### References:

- [www.usbreastfeeding.org/p/cm/ld/fid=899](http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/p/cm/ld/fid=899)
- [www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/about-breastfeeding/why-it-matters.html](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/about-breastfeeding/why-it-matters.html)
- [www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/2020-Breastfeeding-Report-Card-H.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/2020-Breastfeeding-Report-Card-H.pdf)

# Healthy Communities Strategy

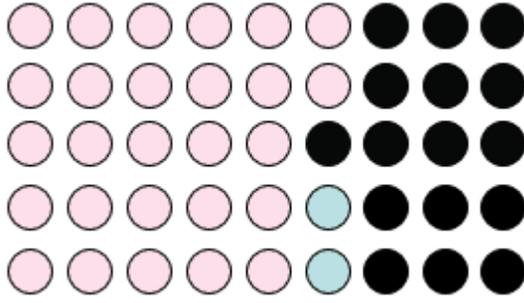
## Breastfeeding Friendly Designations/Awards

### Statewide Results

Since June 2019, Local Health Departments working on this strategy have ushered in breastfeeding-friendly policy changes in employers, businesses and outpatient healthcare clinics to achieve:

**45** total breastfeeding-friendly designations, including:

**27**  
Breastfeeding  
Friendly  
Employer  
Awards



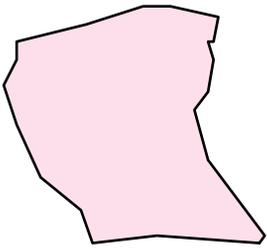
**16**  
Breastfeeding  
Friendly  
Community  
Partner Awards

and

**2**

Mother Baby Awards for Outpatient  
Healthcare Clinics

### Local Spotlight:



The Cumberland County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) works collaboratively with partners to create welcoming environments for breastfeeding mothers through outreach, awareness, and policy change. CCDPH clinics and programs including Health Education, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Child Health, and Women’s Health in partnership with community organizations and coalitions (e.g. Momma’s Village, the Cumberland County Breastfeeding Coalition), developed an outreach campaign for National Breastfeeding Week in August 2019, including the proclamation of Cumberland County as a “breastfeeding friendly community” by the CCDPH Board of Health.

Using the [Making It Work Toolkit](#) as a guide, CCDPH encourages Cumberland County employers to make policy changes that benefit breastfeeding employees and customers. These changes include creating private and secure places to breastfeed and/or express milk, eliminating in-house advertisement of infant formula, and providing reasonable work breaks to allow for employees to pump. Additionally, for customers and patrons, businesses have been encouraged to allow breastfeeding without asking the mother and child to move, leave, or cover up while breastfeeding.

Three Cumberland County employers achieved both the Breastfeeding Friendly Employer Award (BFEA), and the Breastfeeding Friendly Community Partner Award (BFCPA) for a breastfeeding-friendly environment for customers and patrons. Four additional employers meet the standards for both BFEA and BFCPA but are currently awaiting official notification of receiving these awards.



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

NC Department of Health and Human Services • Division of Public Health • Chronic Disease and Injury Section • Block Grant Team  
Healthy Communities Program • [www.publichealth.nc.gov](http://www.publichealth.nc.gov) • 05/2021