



Black Infant Health (BIH) is a health equity program that offers individual and group support to post-partum Black mothers and birthing people. BIH was created in recognition that anti-Black racism, social and economic stressors, and neighborhood conditions contribute to poor birth outcomes for Black mothers, birthing people, and infants. In California, and across the United States, Black mothers and birthing people experience some of the highest rates of life-threatening childbirth

complications, deaths from pregnancy-related causes, and babies born too early or too small. The BIH program structure and strategies help participants enhance life skills within a culturally affirming and supportive environment that honors the unique history of Black women and birthing people. BIH seeks to impact not only participants themselves, but future generations of Black women, infants, and families.

Our Goal: To advance CDPH's long-term goal of achieving healthy pregnancy and birthing outcomes for Black infants, women, and birthing people.

We Serve: Black women and birthing people who are 16 years or older, pregnant, or up to six months postpartum at the time of enrollment, regardless of income.

Service Delivery: Services are free and provided by Family Health Advocates, Group Facilitators, Public Health Nurses, and Social Workers.

Outcomes: Evaluations show BIH's empowerment-focused, group model is a

promising strategy for improving Black women's birth outcomes. BIH participants report:

- ▶ Enhanced life skills and reduced stress
- ▶ Greater feelings of personal empowerment, leading to healthy behavior changes
- ▶ Strong social support, including positive connections to their heritage and the Black women in their community

Funding: [Federal Title V MCH Block Grant Funds](#), Federal Title XIX (Medicaid) Funds and State General Funds.

Where We Are

Services are provided in communities where over 90% of Black births occur:

Counties:

- Alameda
- Contra Costa
- Fresno
- Kern
- Los Angeles
- Orange
- Riverside
- Sacramento
- San Bernardino
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- San Joaquin
- Santa Clara
- Orange

Cities:

- Long Beach
- Pasadena



Program Services

Culturally Appropriate Services that Respect the Participant's Values and Beliefs.

The program includes empowerment-focused group support services and one-on-one (1:1) support to improve the health and social conditions for Black women and their families. Activities draw from promising practices and are based on the findings of a 2010 comprehensive assessment of the BIH model.

Group Sessions: BIH provides 10 prenatal and 10 postpartum sessions designed to empower and support participants. Group sessions are led by culturally supportive staff who reflect the

target population served, and provide attendees with the opportunity to bond and support other pregnant women. Sessions cover a number of varying topics, including:

- ▶ Cultural heritage as a source of pride
- ▶ Healthy pregnancy, labor & delivery
- ▶ Nurturing ourselves & our babies
- ▶ Prenatal, postnatal & newborn care
- ▶ Stress management
- ▶ Healthy relationships

1:1 Support: Participants also have 1:1 sessions, which are intended to support participants in making healthy choices. Topics covered include:

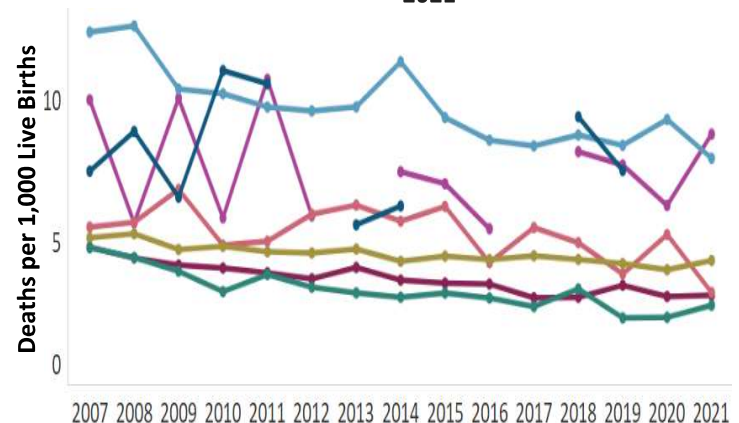
- ▶ Referrals for identified services (e.g., medical, dental, social)
- ▶ Guidance on family planning
- ▶ Identification of strengths and problem-solving skills
- ▶ Assistance with setting short and long-term goals

1:1 support is available to 16 and 17-year-old participants and those who are unable to attend group sessions.

Black Maternal Health & Birth Statistics

- ▶ Health disparities affecting Black women and babies appear to be less dependent on age, economic status, or education.
- ▶ Poor birth outcomes persist even when Black women have a pregnancy at an optimal age, have high income, or are well educated.
- ▶ Black women are 3 to 3.6 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latina, and White women.¹
- ▶ Black babies are 1.4 to 2 times as likely to be born with a low birth weight (less than 5 lbs., 8 oz.) than infants of other racial or ethnic groups.²

Infant Mortality by Race/Ethnicity
2021



To review the most recent data on birth disparities by race and ethnicity, consult the MCAH data dashboards at go.cdph.ca.gov/MCAH-Dashboards

¹California Department of Public Health, Center for Family Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division, Pregnancy-Related Mortality Dashboard, Last Modified April 2024. go.cdph.ca.gov/Pregnancy-Related-Mortality-Dashboard

²California Department of Public Health, Center for Family Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division, Birthweight Dashboard, Last Modified March 2024. go.cdph.ca.gov/Low-Birthweight-Dashboard