

Impact Report

2023

open arms
perinatal services



Transitioning and Transforming

During childbirth, there is a stage called transition. It is one of the most physically challenging parts of giving birth. Afterward, there can be a moment to rest and prepare the body and mind for the final stages of bringing a new human into the world.

This is why I always think of transition as transformative. I received the gift of such a moment of transformation in 2023, thanks to a sabbatical funded by the BIPOC ED Coalition and Open Arms. This gift helped both Open Arms and I start 2024 ready for the transitions and transformations that lie ahead.

As you can see by how much we accomplished in 2023, Open Arms continues to go beyond how many families we serve to how deeply and how well we support them. The many ways we can circle our arms around one family include: birth doulas, childbirth educators, and family connectors dedicated to individualized resource assistance, peer-based lactation counseling, and support groups.

We are alongside every family and baby through physical and emotional transitions and milestones.

I am in constant awe of the brilliant, amazing Open Arms team of staff and doulas that I'm so fortunate to be a part of.

In 2024 we received a major vote of confidence in our work in the form of a generous gift from MacKenzie Scott. We are honored by this affirmation that we "walk the talk" and that our outcomes show our impact. This gift will sustain our ability to advocate for policies that further racial and reproductive justice and will allow us to deepen our services. And we will continue to model high-quality perinatal care while growing the BIPOC community-based perinatal health workforce.

For us, this gift represented someone lifting up Open Arms and saying: *We see you, we believe in what you are doing. Dream even bigger.*

And so, we will, and we are. We are working hard to prepare for our next intense stage, providing birth doula services through Medicaid, potentially increasing the number of families we will be able to support.

This transition will not happen overnight; and we are investing time and resources now into thoughtful and intentional planning to continue to provide multiple layers of support to our families. It will be a transition. And just as we tell our families, transitions birth transformation.

Thank you for staying in this with us, for always dreaming bigger for birthing and parenting families, and always knowing we will do even greater things.

You always knew we will do even greater things.



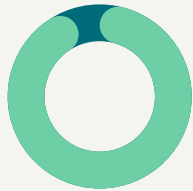
Dila K Perera, MSW, MPH
Executive Director



2023 In Review

One constant at Open Arms is **the outstanding maternal and infant health outcomes our families achieve year after year**. Our culturally matched care enables our providers to build trust, dismantle barriers, and recognize nuances often overlooked by others, significantly impacting each of our families and their babies.

Expecting parents in our programs receive tailored support, including prenatal lactation and childbirth education, peer parent support groups, lactation counseling, and comprehensive birth and postpartum care from our dedicated doulas. **Our remarkable outcomes highlight the power of culturally responsive care and the difference it makes in our community.**



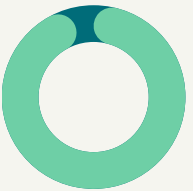
95%
Born at Healthy Birth Weight

Compared to 93% for WA State in 2022



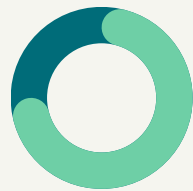
91%
Breast/chestfeeding at 6 months

Compared to 73% for WA State in 2021



96%
Born at Full Term

Compared to 91% for WA State in 2022



75%
Vaginal Birth

Compared to 70% for WA State in 2022



2023 By The Numbers

425

Families Received Individualized Support



2,334
Hours of Birth Support



89%

Of Clients Identify as Black, Indigenous, or Other People of Color

1,354
Participants in Group Services

3,093
Family Home Visits



300
Community Education Events

142,700
Diapers Distributed in Partnership with Westside Baby



Community-Based Doula Support



Back in 2009, our Community-based Outreach Doula program was the first in the nation to be accredited by HealthConnect One, an organization dedicated to training and mobilizing community health workers to provide birth support to the communities that need it most. In May 2023, **our partners at HealthConnect One visited our offices at El Centro de la Raza to reaccredit our program**—a testament to the high quality of care our Outreach Doulas provide to the families we support.

Together, our Birth and Outreach Doulas **attended nearly 300 births in 2023 and spent over 2,500 hours counseling birthing people through pregnancy, birth, and early parenting.**

Growing Our Reach

In 2023, we expanded our support for birth doula services throughout the region. In Pierce County, **our partnership with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's Black Infant Health program enabled families to receive culturally matched birth doula services.** We developed a referral pathway that made it easier for families to connect with our doulas, and we recruited additional doulas to serve the Tacoma area. Additionally, **we collaborated with Elevate Health to encourage more BIPOC residents in Pierce County to pursue careers in birth work,** further increasing the availability of culturally specific support.

Through our partnership with Wellpoint and the Center for Indigenous Midwifery, **we grew the doula workforce by training 29 new doulas, all of whom identify as Black, Indigenous, or other People of Color.** These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to making culturally responsive care more widely available across the Puget Sound region.



Lactation Support

2023 was an incredible year for Lactation Support at Open Arms! **The International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners recognized our program with the IBCLC Care Award for Excellence in Lactation Care**, showing that the care we provide does not go unnoticed.

That's not all! Our Lactation Support Clinical Lead and Community Education Lead, Elizabeth Montez –one of the few Indigenous IBCLCs in the United States–**was invited to join leading experts at the Lactation Unlocked Conference as the keynote speaker**. Elizabeth spoke about the importance of reclaiming ancestral and Indigenous knowledge to help restore what was lost when colonization disrupted lactation practices in Indigenous, Black, and other impacted communities in the United States. **Bridging evidence-informed care with cultural practices remains central to all of our approaches.**



Thanks to the Bellevue Apple Store, El Centro de la Raza has a new Mamava lactation pod! The pod is accessible to our staff, clients, and building guests. We are thrilled to finally have a private, dedicated nursing and pumping space!



Family Support

Our Family Connectors **bridge gaps in healthcare and access to social services in our community by guiding families through health insurance enrollment, rental assistance, SNAP/EBT applications, and more**. Families in our doula and lactation programs receive supplementary support from us through our Baby Boutique, referrals to partner organizations for mental health support or domestic violence advocacy, or connections to public programs for basic needs.

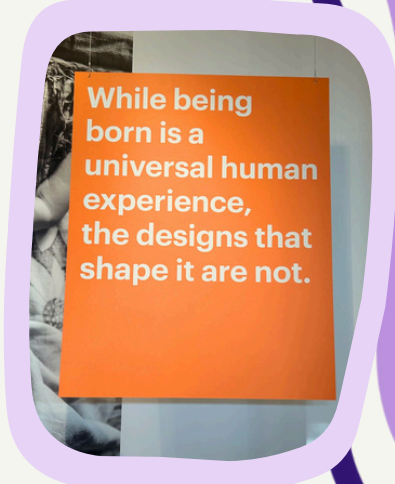
The Equitable Communities Initiative recognized our Family Support Services team's impact in May 2023 with an award for health navigation!

In The Community

In 2023, Open Arms strengthened our local roots while expanding our national presence, showcasing the impact of our work across diverse platforms. **Our team shared insights at high-profile venues, including the King County Board of Health, the University of Washington, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**, sharing our impact with key policymakers.

Our Executive Director, Dila Perera, was featured in the "Designing Motherhood" exhibit at the Gates Foundation Discovery Center, where she contributed to the national dialogue on how design intersects with culture and maternal health. At the inaugural HealthConnect One Birth and Beyond Conference, **our staff led discussions on undoing colonial harm and culturally responsive care for birthing people with a history of genital cutting, highlighting our commitment to healing through culturally informed practices.**

Memorie Gladstone, our Outreach Doula Services Lead, **participated in the American Indian Health Commission's Maternal Infant Health workgroup and the Washington State Maternal Mortality Review Panel**, furthering our dedication to improving health outcomes statewide. Through these efforts, Open Arms continues to build meaningful connections and drive change, ensuring that our mission of equitable birth support resonates far and wide.



Special thanks to our volunteers who lent us their time and talent!



2023 Volunteers

- Bonnie Riley
- Brittini Blanco
- Cassidy Inden
- Christine Leber
- Danielle Lowinger
- Gabrielle Brookshire
- Hannah Scott
- Jasmeen Kaur
- Laura Arpin
- Leanne Spromberg
- Maile Tucker
- Nancy Vicente Dominguez
- Sarah Bryc
- Sofia Nakhnikian-Weintraub
- Vanessa Vassall

Community Education & Engagement

We are committed to supporting **aspiring and practicing birth workers of color through our Community Education and Engagement programs**. We offer birth worker training, peer support groups, as well as prenatal lactation and childbirth education classes for our families.

We're especially proud of our Community Lactation Specialist Pathway, which provides community members with resources and mentoring to become Lactation Support Peer Counselors or International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC). Out of the 37-person cohort in 2023, **two went on to pass their International Board-Certified Lactation Exams, introducing new board-certified lactation consultants of color to Washington State!**

"To be able to support community members in accessing the skills, education, and expertise that they feel called to, in a way that is culturally relevant and celebrates us, is deeply restorative. We each carry in us the seeds of our birthrights, and this program is about nurturing that within us."

– Elizabeth Montez, Lactation Support Clinical Lead & Community Education Lead

Public News Service

SOUTH SEATTLE
EMERALD

HUFFPOST

The Seattle Times

KUOW ORG 94.9

npr Network

In The News

In 2023, our work was highlighted in several media outlets. The Seattle Times featured Open Arms in an article reporting on the racial inequities within King County's infant mortality rates, **indicating deeply unmet needs, particularly in Black and Native communities.**

The article highlighted our participation at a King County Board of Health meeting, where we emphasized how **our culturally relevant and personalized care improves health outcomes for Black and Native birthing people and their babies**, including a preterm birth rate that was half the county's average.

Advocacy

2023 was a pivotal year for reproductive rights and family support services in Washington, with key legislative wins closely aligning with our mission. **The state strengthened its position as a sanctuary for reproductive health with the 'My Health, My Data Act' and a shield law to protect out-of-state abortion seekers and providers, ensuring safer access for the communities we serve.** The state's stockpile of 30,000 doses of mifepristone further safeguards reproductive autonomy, directly impacting those who rely on access to comprehensive care.

Increased support through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), cash grants, and expanded funding for early childhood programs—such as home visiting and quality pre-K—aligns with Open Arms' advocacy for family-centered care. **These developments bolster the resources available to our families, helping them thrive from the start.** We are grateful to have been selected as a **2023 Advocacy Grantee by the Washington Women's Foundation.** **This enables us to continue advocating for policies that align with our commitment to equitable care and support for all families in Washington.**



A Path Toward Safer Maternal Healthcare

The 2023 Maternal Mortality Review Panel report brought some important truths to light: 80% of maternal deaths in Washington State from 2017 to 2020 were preventable. This reinforces what Open Arms and so many others have been saying for years—improving maternal health means tackling racism and bias in our healthcare system head-on. The report laid out six key steps to make a difference:

- Undo racism and bias
- Support mental health and substance use recovery
- Improve access to quality healthcare
- Strengthen clinical care
- Meet basic human needs
- Address and prevent violence

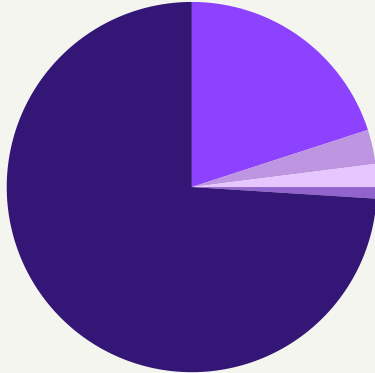
There's real momentum to make maternal healthcare safer and more equitable. By pushing for these changes, we can save lives and build a future where every birthing person receives the care they deserve!



2023 Financials

Revenue

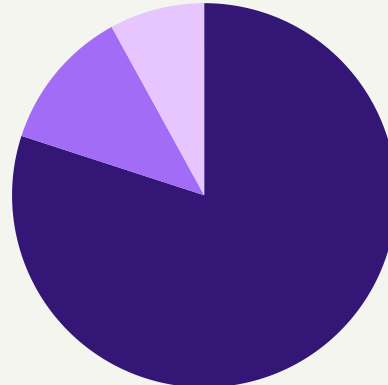
Total: \$4,439,712



- ▶ Government **74%**
- ▶ Corporate & Foundation **20%**
- ▶ Events **3%**
- ▶ Individual **2%**
- ▶ Earned Income **1%**

Expenses

Total: \$4,247,931



- ▶ Programs **80%**
- ▶ Management **12%**
- ▶ Fundraising **8%**



Achieving great outcomes takes a village and...cash!

This report is based on audited financials for the 2023 calendar year.

Who We Are

January 2023–August 31, 2024

Our Team

Amelia Martinez Martinez	Karina Arroyo
Andrea Balina	Kate Wilhite Brickell
Angela Agoo	Kristin Travis
Betty Hernandez	Lanetra Barron
Brittany Oladipupo	Lea Johnson
Cynthia Turrietta	LeChante Raiwalui
Danielle Baer	Le'Ecia Farmer
De Angelo Jones	Lesly Velasco–Martinez
Deandra Ludovice	Loida Ginocchio Silva
Delina Seyoum	Margarita Celis
Dila Perera	Marie Schlagel
Donna Reitz	Markia Brinson
Dzoara Del Toro	Memorie Gladstone
Elena Maria Teare	Micki Greer
Elizabeth Montez	Molly Krost
Elizabeth Perez Garcia	Natasha Blanchard
Emily Trujillo	Olga Prado Leon
Ellie Frischmann	Peggy Allen Jackson
Eula Scott Bynoe	Qadra Ali
Fatuma Mohamud	Rokea Jones
Hawa Egal	Shadia Nagi
Isabel Vicente Dominguez	Stacey Silver
Jacqueline Hamilton	Stephanie Quinn
Jami Bess	Tanya Anderson
Janae Teal	Terri Chi-Lee
Janauvia Anthony	Van Bussell-Packard
Jessy Trevizo	Vonda Prioleau

Birth Doulas

Alanna Cotton
Alice Arden
Anastasia Stryukova
Andrea Torres
Asha Osman Abdi
Brenda Garcia–Rabb
Caelynn Everson
Cashew Pendergrass
Chelsea Staples
Christina Jones–Norris
Courtney McGrue
Damarria Davis
Ela Tinocco–Herrera
Falisha Samuels
Hafso Nur–Farah
Hayley McKie
Jasmine Stuverud
Jacqueline Foster
Jessica Kiely
Jin Moon
Joanna Taleno
LaShaye Stanton
Lauryn Bell
La Tonia Bussell–Packard
LeChante Raiwalui

Marisol Ruiz–Dominguez
Maya Ewings
Nigesty Hagos
Rebeca Gomez
Rut Tecleab
Stephani Gregg
Yurany Zapata Manunga

Board of Directors

Alissa Wehrman
Annette Promes
Amanda Heffernan
C. Marie Taylor
Dan Escobar
Dawn Croft
Estella C. Williamson
Kathy Park
Katie Hess
Kevin Proctor, Co–President
Liz Clyma
Mari Offenbecher, Co–President
Meg Crager
Pia Sampaga–Khim, Secretary
Veronica (Nika) Cull, Treasurer

Look What You Helped Us Do!

**Thank You for Being an Essential
Part of the Open Arms Community!**

Thank you for caring
about our families.
We ♥ you!



open arms
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www.openarmsps.org

Thriving children. Healthy families. Powerful communities.