

open arms
perinatal services



2024 Impact Report

Let's Keep Pushing

2024 was quite a year! I'm filled with gratitude for the families who trust us, the birthworkers who walk beside them, and the community that makes it all possible. The challenges we've faced together didn't arrive in isolation; they've layered onto years already shaped by a global pandemic, political challenges, and rising costs of living. Yet, through it all, our community continues to show up with strength and care. That resilience fuels us for the road ahead.

In this report, you'll find highlights from 2024: moments of care, connection, advocacy, and joy. We hope you'll take heart in how far we've come, together. In 2025, we remain with clear eyes and renewed resolve. The challenges are real, and so is our determination.

Since January, federal funding freezes and program cuts have hit many of our partners and families hard. Even the words and principles that proudly describe our work—BIPOC, equitable, culturally responsive, birthing people, justice—feel unsafe. But we will continue to live by our values. We've always spoken truth to power and lead by example, and that's not going to change.

One way we lead is by using science and data to share our impact. Open Arms co-authored a peer-reviewed article that was recently published in *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, highlighting the power and impact of community-based doula care. Again, this study confirms what we and you already know: science and data show that culturally responsive, trust-based care improves outcomes, lowers barriers to mental health support, and affirms the strength of our communities.

And we feel and see that impact every day. Demand for our services continues to rise. With Washington now offering Medicaid reimbursement for doulas, we continue to move forward even as that very achievement is under threat. We continue building the world we want to see for our children.

We're focused on building systems that connect more families to care while managing uncertainty. Communities hold resilience and strength, even as institutions cause harm.

Let's not lose hope or sight of how we can nurture and protect that resilience and strength. Together, we're working for a future where birthing people and their babies are protected, and all children are born into safety, joy, and love. That's what doula-ing this community looks like: holding space, bearing witness and moving forward through the unknown. We are walking this road together, not alone. Thank you for your continued presence and partnership.

With love, gratitude, and resolve,

Dila K Perera, MSW, MPH
Executive Director



2024 in Reflection

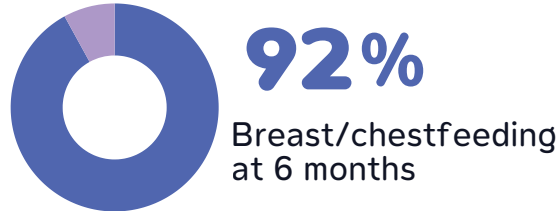
Relationships are at the heart of what we do. We are rooted in providing culturally responsive care through community-rooted providers, while expanding access to vital resources. Every year, our services become more holistic. Families can access lactation education before and after birth, culturally specific childbirth classes, peer support groups, as well as birth and postpartum care from our dedicated doulas.

We are helping parents feel prepared, supported, and confident during one of life's most important transitions. Our consistent, exceptional maternal and infant health outcomes reflect how our providers show up for families, year after year.

We are partnering with families to build strong, lasting foundations for their children's futures.



Compared to 93% for WA State in 2022



Compared to 73% for WA State in 2021



Compared to 91% for WA State in 2022



Compared to 70% for WA State in 2023



2024 By The Numbers



486

Families Received
Individualized
Services



1,594

Hours of Birth
Support

23,125

Diapers
Distributed

91%

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

2,255

Participants in
Group Services

240

Community
Education
Events



6,292

Family Home
Visits



Community-Rooted Doula Support

Together, our Birth and Outreach Doulas supported **more than 200 births in 2024** and provided **over 3,000 in-person visits, guiding parents through pregnancy, birth, and early parenting.** Open Arms doulas shine as powerful providers of community-based perinatal services, and their impact reaches beyond families: this year, our doulas contributed to two research studies documenting how doula support improves birth outcomes and strengthens perinatal mental health for communities of color. The diversity and lived experiences of our doulas remain one of our greatest strengths, enriching the care we provide.

In 2024, our Birth Doula Team grew to **30+ providers offering services in nine languages,** expanding access for families across the region. We also joined **21 organizations nationwide** and established core competencies that set standards for doula care across the country. Our Outreach Doula Program marked **10 years as the nation's first HealthConnect One-accredited program,** underscoring our long-standing commitment to delivering high-quality, culturally rooted care.

Empowering the Birth Workforce

In 2024, we mobilized our collective resources to support doulas through Washington State's new licensure process for Medicaid reimbursement, following the state's landmark decision to set the highest Medicaid reimbursement rate in the nation. Working alongside the Doulas4All coalition, Open Arms hosted multiple enrollment parties, walking with our doulas step by step through the certification process to ensure access to equitable pay.

Yet, Medicaid's uncertain future leaves both Open Arms and our doulas questioning how this hard-fought pay structure will hold up and how potential shifts could affect the families we serve. What we know for certain is this: no matter what happens at the federal or state level, Open Arms will continue to provide free, culturally attuned doula care to our communities. And **we will continue to advocate fiercely for fair compensation and the structural supports that all doulas deserve.**



Community Education & Engagement Programs

2024 included many other activities that supported both aspiring and practicing birth workers of color, while continuing to provide parent support groups, prenatal lactation education, and childbirth education. Our **Childbirth Education program** offered free culturally aligned classes to more than **100 families of color**, helping parents build confidence and make informed choices throughout the perinatal journey.

Through our **Community Lactation Specialist (CLS) Pathway**, we centered ancestral and cultural practices while providing mentorship and scholarship support. In 2024, we welcomed **28 new all-BIPOC cohort members**. Graduates will "rematriate" their knowledge back into the community, and provide support as certified lactation peer counselors. So far, **four BIPOC cohort members have become certified as International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC)**. They are advancing representation in the lactation field and strengthening care for families of color.



"We're bringing ourselves to the table, we're building whole new rooms, and creating better systems"

Elizabeth Montez,
Lactation Support Clinical
Lead & Community
Education Lead

Lactation Support Services

Our lactation team put down new roots and extended our reach deeper into the community. In 2024, Open Arms providers conducted **165 lactation home visits** and hosted over **100 lactation lounges**, welcoming new parents to ask questions, build confidence, and connect with others on their lactation journeys. We grew our bilingual services by welcoming **two new Spanish-speaking lactation counselors**, launching **weekly in-person lactation lounges in both Spanish and English**, and expanding Spanish-language home visiting. Our Lactation Clinical Lead, Elizabeth Montez, IBCLC, also offered in-person, drop-in clinical support, further extending access to culturally grounded lactation care for families.



Family Support Services

In 2024, the **Baby Boutique re-opened to the community** and quickly returned as a flourishing hub of connection and care, welcoming more than **900 visits**. Families could stop by not only for diapers and baby essentials, but also for lactation support through our in-person **Lactation Lounge**, resource navigation with a **Family Connector**, and opportunities to meet other parents at **Parent Gatherings**—all in a single visit. We reached over **600 people with two in-person family events**.

Through our **weekly drop-in helpline** and one-on-one support, Family Connectors made more than **300 referrals** to bridge families with essential resources, including rental assistance, domestic violence advocacy, health insurance, and childcare. We also bolstered community-wide support, hosting **four Resource Roundtables** that connected birth workers with community partners.



Advocacy

2024 brought significant progress for perinatal health in Washington and beyond.

Medicaid coverage was extended from three months to twelve months postpartum, ensuring families receive continuous care during the critical first year after birth. This expansion directly benefits the families we serve, allowing our doulas and lactation specialists to walk alongside parents longer and with greater continuity.

Washington State declared May as Maternal Mental Health Awareness Month, helping to reduce stigma and increase awareness of perinatal behavioral health conditions. Washington midwives achieved a **national first: licensed midwives were granted prescriptive authority**, enabling clients to directly access contraception and essential medications for common prenatal and postpartum conditions. This reduces barriers to reproductive care, and reinforces the community-based continuum of care in which Open Arms doulas and lactation specialists play a vital role.

"Advocacy Day with the Doulas 4 All Coalition was inspiring! I'm grateful to connect with birthworkers and advocates uplifting doulas' vital role in advancing reproductive rights, maternal health, and the well-being of families across Washington"

Jami Bess,
Director of Programs



Out In the World



In 2024, Open Arms showed up locally, statewide, and nationally to learn, share, and lead in the movement for thriving children, healthy families, and powerful communities. We joined our global community at the **Black Maternal Health Conference in Atlanta**, where we connected with leaders advancing equity in maternal health. Our Lactation Team participated in the **GOLD Lactation Conference**, honing their clinical skills and exploring new research and practices in lactation care. Our Lactation Clinical Lead also presented at the inaugural Indigenous Milk Medicine Conference. Our Outreach Doulas represented Open Arms at the **CityMatCH Leadership & Maternal Child Health Epidemiology Conference**, bringing back valuable insights to strengthen our programs.

Closer to home, Open Arms staff provided statewide leadership by training providers through the **Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV)** on Domestic Violence Assessment, Response, and Family Safety Planning.

In The News

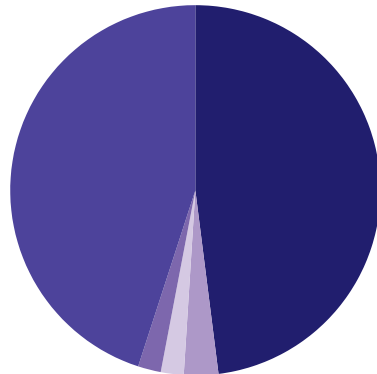
Open Arms was featured in several media outlets this year. Our providers shared interviews and perspectives with publications including King 5 and PBS, while our Yield Giving award received significant local and national coverage.



2024 Financials

Revenue

\$5,529,702

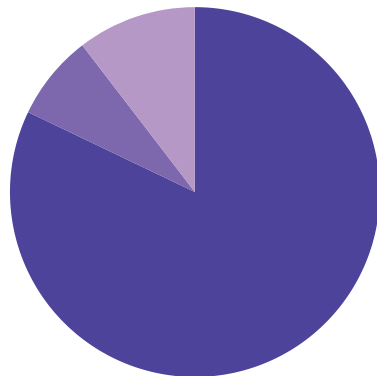


- ▶ Government Grants **45%**
- ▶ Corporate & Foundation Grants **48%**
- ▶ Events **3%**
- ▶ Individual Donations **2%**
- ▶ Earned Income **2%**

*Love
Community
Resources
= Lasting Impact*

Expenses

\$4,134,056



- ▶ Programs **82%**
- ▶ Management **8%**
- ▶ Fundraising **10%**



Who We Are

Open Arms Perinatal Services is powered by nearly 100 dedicated staff, key contractors, and volunteers. Many started as participants in our programs.



Thank You Board Members and Volunteers

*Thank you
volunteers!*



We are grateful to our Board of Directors for their wisdom and support. Special thank you to Pia, Mari, Kevin, Alyssa, Dan and Estella who completed their board member tenure in 2024 after serving over 30 years collectively. Thank you all for your guidance and for being strong advocates of our work.

In 2024, over 30 new volunteers joined us and contributed hundreds of hours of meaningful support. From maintaining our Baby Boutique to ensure a dignified and welcoming experience for families, to helping coordinate events like Winterfest and Labor of Love, this extraordinary group makes our work possible.





2524 16th Ave S # 207A
Seattle, WA 98144

Look What You Helped Us Do!

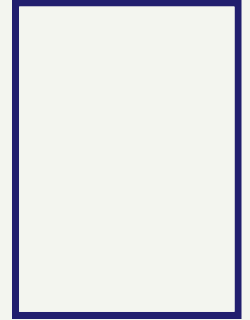
**Thank You for Being an Essential
Part of the Open Arms Community!**



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

www.openarmsps.org

Thriving children. Healthy families. Powerful communities.



To :
