

2025

**black  
infant  
health**   
Empowering Pregnant and  
Mothering Black Women

 **Riverside  
University  
HEALTH SYSTEM**



# Rallying Around Sisters:

Redefining and Strengthening the Village



# ABOUT THE PERINATAL EQUITY INITIATIVE

## Rallying Around Sisters: Redefining and Strengthening the Village

Every woman deserves to feel supported, heard, and celebrated throughout her pregnancy and birthing journey. In Riverside County, we're building something beautiful - a community that recognizes the incredible strength of Black mothers and wraps them in love during life's most precious moments.

The Rallying Around Sisters campaign grows from a heartfelt truth: when we strengthen the village around Black birthing people, we strengthen entire families and communities. Building on the foundation of California's Black Infant Health Program, which has been supporting mothers since 1989—and enhanced by the Perinatal Equity Initiative launched in 2018, this movement is all about connection, care, and community.

Riverside University Health System-Public Health's Perinatal Equity Initiative creates more than programs; it builds lasting relationships. Through partnerships with the Fatherhood Initiative Services Program and Community Doula Services Program, we're creating a circle of support that surrounds families from pregnancy through those precious early months with a baby. Our community advisory board ensures that Black mothers and families are at the heart of everything we do.

This is about creating spaces where Black women feel truly seen, heard, and supported. It's about honoring each mother's unique journey and making sure she has everything she needs to thrive. We're building a community where every Black mother in Riverside County knows she has a village ready to celebrate her and support her family.

**“Addressing perinatal health disparities and focusing to improve birth outcomes for Black infants and Black mothers is one of our highest priorities as we know that showing care and concern for our babies is an indicator of how we care for the entire life course of the community and is the right start toward improved health outcomes.”**

– Stephanie Bryant, Branch Chief of the Maternal, Child Adolescent Health and Public Health Nursing Services, Riverside University Health System-Public Health.

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# PRESS RELEASE

## Riverside County Deepens Commitment to Black Maternal Health with Ongoing “Rallying Around Sisters” Campaign

RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CA — In Riverside County, the village is alive and thriving. Through Rallying Around Sisters: Redefining and Strengthening the Village, Riverside University Health System-Public Health continues to uplift Black mothers by expanding community-based support rooted in cultural wisdom and real-world impact.

Built on the strong foundation of California’s Black Infant Health Program (established in 1989) and expanded through the Perinatal Equity Initiative (launched in 2018), this campaign helps ensure Black birthing people receive the care, community, and respect they deserve.

“We’ve seen how powerful it is when Black mothers are surrounded by people who truly understand and advocate for them,” says Stephanie Bryant, Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Director. “This initiative takes that power and weaves it into every step of the journey—from pregnancy to postpartum.”

The campaign continues to deliver impressive outcomes by reaching families through multiple digital media channels, billboards, and cinema advertisements. Additionally, all campaign images feature Black families who reside in Riverside County.

Led by voices from the community, including a robust advisory board of mothers, doulas, and healthcare workers—the initiative also supports: Fatherhood Services, helping build family resilience from all sides  
Community Doulas, providing culturally responsive care

Quarterly convenings, creating space for learning, advocacy, and accountability.

“What makes this so special is that we’re not inventing new wisdom—we’re elevating the wisdom that’s already in our communities,” adds Curley Palmer, Program Coordinator.

As the campaign continues, Riverside County invites everyone—health providers, neighbors, partners, and allies—to ask: “How am I showing up for Black mothers? Because when we rally around our sisters, we don’t just change outcomes. We change everything.”

For more information visit:

<https://www.ruhealth.org/perinatal-equity-initiative> and join in on the conversation on social media by following @blackinfanthealthrivco on Instagram.

###

*Media Contact: Kerri Mabee [k.mabee@ruhealth.org](mailto:k.mabee@ruhealth.org)*

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**FACT SHEET**

# 2025 Riverside County Black Infant Health



## IMPACT STATISTICS 2022-2025

Program Participation (as of 2025)

- Between July 1, 2022-May 23, 2025, RUHS-PH Black Infant Health (BIH) recruited a total of **1,110** participants of those, 810 participants officially enrolled into the BIH program!
- More than **250** fathers graduated from the Perinatal Equity Initiative (PEI) Fatherhood Initiative Services Program.
- More than **175** Black mothers received direct doula services through the PEI Community Doula Services Program.
- **17** Black doulas trained who are serving the Coachella Valley area, an underserved area in Riverside County.

## BIH/PEI PROGRAM FEEDBACK

- 97.4% of participants said the program helped them set goals
- 97.8% said BIH staff helped participants become empowered
- 99.2% of participants said they would refer a friend to BIH
- \*Source: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov> (BIH participant survey)

### HEALTH DISPARITIES IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY

- Black women are 1.5 times more likely to go into preterm labor
- Black women are 4 times more likely to have pregnancy complications
- Infants born to Black mothers are nearly two times as likely to be born at a low birth weight
- Black infants are twice as likely to die within the first year of life



### How BIH is changing this:

- 10 prenatal and 10 postpartum empowerment-focused group sessions
- Public Health Nurse and Mental Health professional support
- Health Educators providing education and goal attainment support
- Individual Client Plans/Life Plans to help mothers plan their future
- Transportation assistance
- Incentives for weekly session attendance
- Community resource referrals

### 2025 PROGRAM GOALS

Continue to expand services to reach additional families in the Inland Empire.  
Enhance and build on virtual support options for families in remote areas.  
Increase father participation through targeted outreach.  
Establish new community partnerships for comprehensive care.  
Increase the community doula workforce through targeted engagement and outreach.



# A Mother's Journey Map



## FIRST STEPS | MONTHS 1-3

**Preparation Priorities:** Build your support team

- Connect with Black Infant Health: (951) 210-1385
- Begin BIH group sessions with other Black mothers
- Add culturally responsive providers to your birth team
- Consider Sankofa Birthworkers' free doula services
- Nurture your body: movement, water, rest, quality food



## GROWING STRONGER: MONTHS 4-6

**Preparation Priorities:** Create your birth plan (BIH can help)

- Learn medical terms to advocate for yourself
- Discuss financial options (insurance, Medi-Cal, HSA)
- Start preparing your home for baby's arrival
- Practice communication techniques with your village
- Join the BIH community to share experiences



## NEW BEGINNINGS | POSTPARTUM

**Your Priority:** Rest and recover

- Lean on your village for meals, childcare, household help
- Consider breastfeeding (burns 500 calories per feeding)
- Attend BIH postpartum sessions for continued support
- Watch for signs you need additional support
- Practice self-care: breaks, gentle movement, hydration

## THE FINAL STRETCH: MONTHS 7-9

**Your Priority:** Prepare for birth day

- Finalize birth plan with your doula or BIH educator
- Pack items that bring comfort and cultural connection
- Arrange postpartum support schedule with your village
- Tour birth facility and ask about their protocols
- Watch for maternal warning signs for conditions like postpartum preeclampsia or postpartum depression
- Trust your instincts - they're your ancestral wisdom



### Ways Your Village Rallies

**BELIEVE** her concerns from the first mention  
**ADVOCATE** alongside her with the medical providers  
**RESPECT** her birth choices - they are HERS alone

**ENSURE** she has support at every appointment  
**PROVIDE** practical help without being asked

Rallying Around Sisters: Redefining  
and Strengthening the Village

Every mother deserves a village that strengthens her power.

For support: (951) 210-1385 | [ruheath.org/public-health/black-infant-health](http://ruheath.org/public-health/black-infant-health) | [@blackinfanthealthtrivco](https://www.instagram.com/blackinfanthealthtrivco)



# Social Media Toolkit





# SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

## How To Use

Spread the word that you are Rallying Around Sisters: Redefining and Strengthening the Village with Riverside County's Black Infant Health Program.

### Hashtags:

#RallyAroundSisters #SupportBlackMothers #MaternalHealth  
#BlackInfantHealth #PerinatalEquity

### Accounts to Follow and Tag:

Riverside

<https://www.instagram.com/blackinfanthealthrivco/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BlackInfantHealthofRiversideCounty/>

[https://twitter.com/blackinfant\\_ca](https://twitter.com/blackinfant_ca)

# SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

## INSTAGRAM

- The village isn't a metaphor—it's a lifeline. 🧡 In Riverside County, Rallying Around Sisters means doulas, healthcare workers, midwives, mental health professionals and community leaders showing up for Black birthing people with care that's culturally grounded and deeply human.

This is what equity in action looks like.

- Black joy is a birthright. So is safe, loving care during pregnancy and postpartum. Through the PEI and Black Infant Health programs, we're not just addressing disparities—we're honoring the full experience of Black motherhood. ✨ We see you. We support you. We celebrate you

- 📊 These numbers aren't just stats—they're stories:

94.5% of participants felt less stress

97.8% felt more empowered

99.2% would recommend the program to someone they love

That's the power of community-led, culturally informed care.

That's the Rallying Around Sisters difference.

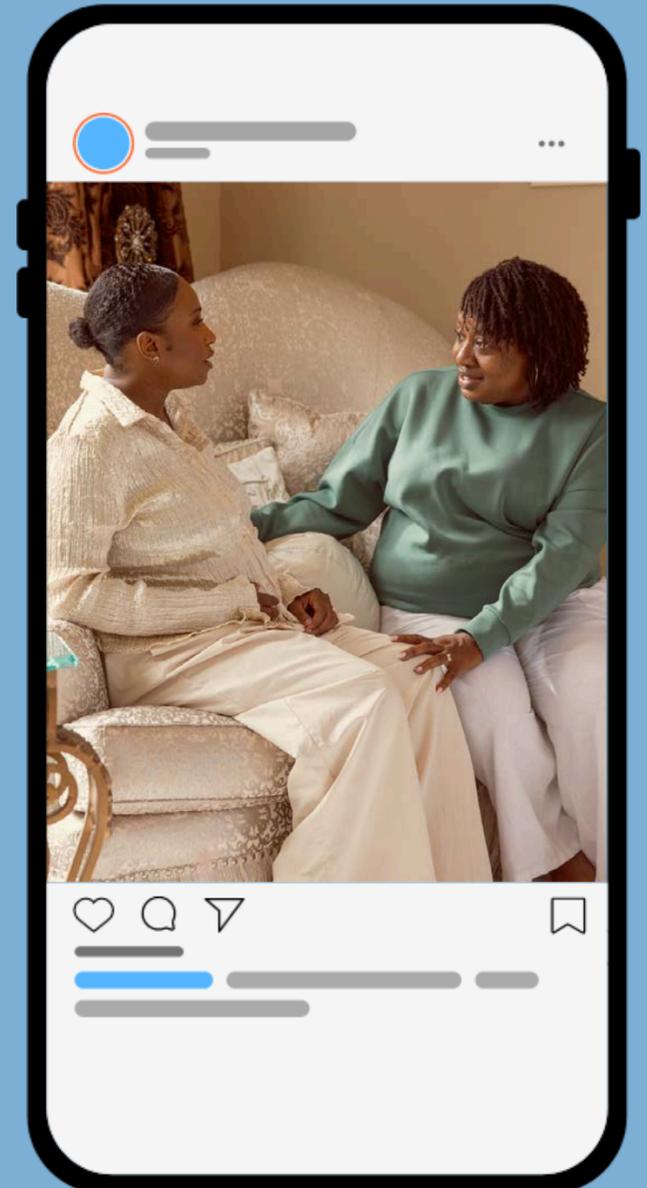
- When we support fathers, we strengthen families. The \*Fatherhood Initiative Services Program\* is a key part of Rallying Around Sisters—because the village includes dads, too. Support. Encourage. Empower. This is what generational care looks like.

- Birth workers aren't just helpers—they're protectors, educators, and advocates. Through the Community Doula Services Program, we're investing in culturally aligned care for Black birthing people across Riverside County.

Support birth workers. Honor Black motherhood.

- Our work is guided by the people we serve. The Rallying Around Sisters campaign is shaped by real mothers and families in Riverside County.

- There's a moment before birth begins—where everything feels sacred. A breath is held. A quiet intention is set. A legacy is about to continue. In Riverside County, we protect that moment with care rooted in culture, dignity, and deep respect. That's what Rallying Around Sisters is about.



# SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

## FACEBOOK

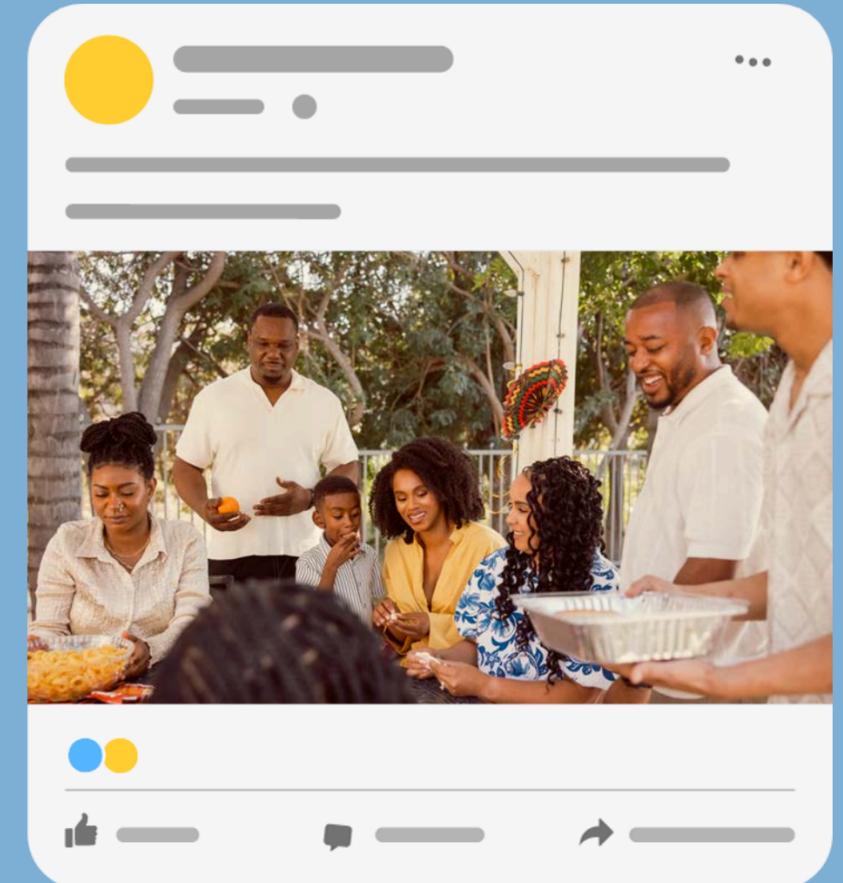
- The village isn't a metaphor—it's a lifeline. 🧡 In Riverside County, Rallying Around Sisters means doulas, healthcare workers, midwives, mental health professionals and community leaders showing up for Black birthing people with culturally grounded, deeply human care. This is what equity in action looks like.
- Black joy is a birthright. So is safe, loving care during pregnancy and postpartum. Through the PEI and Black Infant Health programs, we're not just addressing disparities—we're honoring the full experience of Black motherhood. ✨ We see you. We support you. We celebrate you.
- 📊 These numbers aren't just stats—they're stories: • 94.5% of participants felt less stress • 97.8% felt more empowered • 99.2% would recommend the program to someone they love. That's the power of community-led, culturally informed care.
- When we support fathers, we strengthen families. 🤝 The Fatherhood Initiative Services Program is a vital part of Rallying Around Sisters—because the village includes dads, too. Support. Encourage. Empower. This is what generational care looks like.
- Birth workers are more than helpers—they're protectors, educators, and advocates. Through the Community Doula Services Program, we're investing in culturally aligned care for Black birthing people in Riverside County. Fund birth justice. Honor Black motherhood.
- Our work is guided by the people we serve. The Rallying Around Sisters campaign is shaped by real mothers and families in Riverside County.
- There's a moment before birth begins—where everything slows down. A breath is held. An intention is set. A legacy is about to continue. In Riverside County, we honor that moment with care that's culturally rooted, respectful, and led by community. Rallying Around Sisters is more than a program—it's a commitment to protect Black motherhood at every stage.



# SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

## X, FORMERLY TWITTER

- The village isn't just a saying—it's survival. In Riverside County, doulas + leaders rally for Black birthing people with culturally rooted care. 🤝 This is what equity in action looks like.
- Black joy is a birthright. So is safe, loving care. PEI + BIH honor the full experience of Black motherhood—not just close gaps, but lift stories. ✨ We see you. We celebrate you.
- 📊 These aren't just stats—they're stories:
  - 94.5% = less stress
  - 97.8% = more empowered
  - 99.2% = would recommendThat's community-rooted care.
- The village includes dads too. The Fatherhood Initiative empowers fathers to support & thrive. Support. Encourage. Empower.
- Birth workers = protectors, educators, advocates. Community doulas and midwives are changing birth outcomes across Riverside County. Support them.
- The Rallying Around Sisters campaign is shaped by real mothers and families in Riverside County. Real families lead this work. Our community advisory board brings lived experiences into every decision.
- Before birth begins, there's a quiet moment—a breath, an intention, a legacy in motion. In Riverside County, we protect that space with care rooted in culture and dignity.



# SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

Access Image/Graphics Assets



[INSTAGRAM](#) ↓



[FACEBOOK](#) ↓



[X, FORMERLY KNOWN AS TWITTER](#) ↓

# TEAM AND CONTACT

Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Branch  
Riverside University Health System-Public Health  
Website: <https://www.rivcophn.org/Programs/Black-Infant-Health>

For Black Infant Health Program enrollment:

- Email: [MCAHRivcoReferrals@ruhealth.org](mailto:MCAHRivcoReferrals@ruhealth.org)
- Phone: 951- 210-1385
- Fax: (951) 358-4762



**STEPHANIE BRYANT**  
MCAH Branch Chief



**CURLEY PALMER**  
Perinatal Equity Initiative Program Coordinator



**DEBRA JOHNSON**  
Black Infant Health Program Coordinator



**KEIYANA CARTER**  
Black Infant Health Community Outreach Liaison



**JANEE COCHRELL**  
Black Infant Health Social Services  
Supervisor/Mental Health Professional

