

GROW BIRTH CENTERS GROW COMMUNITY

2023 Impact Report



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GROWING CHANGE



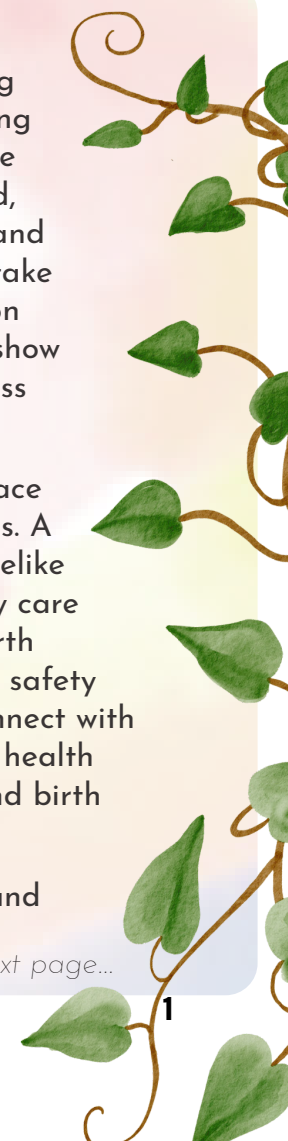
**“All that you touch you change.”
- Octavia Butler**

Every day, in communities across the country, Black, Indigenous, midwives of color are caring for families. Midwives touch the lives of birthing people and families, ensuring that they receive expert perinatal care and that they feel heard, seen, and supported, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Midwives welcome babies as they take their first breath and grow in loving connection that began long before their birth. Midwives show us how safe and loving birth generates wellness for all.

Community birth centers create dedicated space for midwifery-led care and community wellness. A community birth center is a freestanding homelike place where safe, culturally-reverent midwifery care is available to all birthing people. Through birth centers, communities come together to ensure safety and dignity for all birthing people, and to connect with each other in community workshops, gardens, health fairs, and block parties. Through midwifery and birth centers, the social nature of birth is restored.

As communities learn more about midwifery and

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birth centers, the number of birthing people seeking community birth grows. According to research from the National Partnership for Women & Families (NPWF), between 2019 and 2020, there was a 30% increase in Black birthing people opting to give birth in community settings, a 26% increase for Native American birthing people, a 24% increase for Latinx birthing people, and an 18% increase for White and Asian birthing people. (Improving Our Maternity Health Now Through Community Birth Settings, NPWF, April 2022.)

Community birth centers create a viable path forward for improving the US perinatal care system - a system that fuels the present perinatal health crisis in communities of color and ranks poorly in comparison to other wealthy nations. As Birth Center Equity (BCE) CEO and Co-Founder Leseliey Welch told CNN in 2023, "This whole country has operated in a hierarchy of human value based on race. Our hospitals and health systems are no exception." "Survival," said Leseliey, "should be the least we expect in birth care. That's the least we can do for so many families in this country." (CNN, December 9, 2023).

Through the Birth Center Equity network of over 40 birth centers led by Black, Indigenous, people of color, community birth centers are growing deep relationships and shared vision, strategy, and opportunity. Through this collective power, community birth centers:

- ◆ **Create beloved economies** by infusing new resources and energy into communities that have been systematically denied adequate and equitable resources;
- ◆ **Generate solutions** to racial disparities and inequities in birthing that create unsafe conditions for all birthing people,

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- ♦ especially Black, Indigenous, people of color birthing people; and
- ♦ **Lead in creating a midwifery-led, people-centered health care system** that works for everyone.

By growing investment in birth centers led by Black, Indigenous, people of color, BCE touches lives and grows wellness in our communities and our nation.

In 2023, Birth Center Equity led the movement to grow Black, Indigenous, people of color-led birth centers by:

- ♦ Infusing \$1.1 M into community birth centers,
- ♦ Strengthening community birth center networks & relationships, and
- ♦ Growing community birth center visibility.

Moreover, Birth Center Equity is generating creative energy and solutions with the power to transform perinatal health in the US. We are shaping birth center sustainability models through business and leadership development, public-private partnerships, integrated financial models, and economies of scale. We are operationalizing a community-based, values-aligned approach to municipal partner birth center planning. We are exploring innovative ways to aggregate community birth center economic power including revolving loan funds and collective land acquisition infrastructure.

Today, Birth Center Equity steps forward grounded in our achievements and energized by what lies ahead, leading the charge to grow healthy community birth infrastructure for generations to come. Please join with Birth Center Equity to grow birth centers, grow community, and grow abundant futures of wellness for all.

In community,

Leseliey & The BCE Team



VISION & MISSION

VISION

A world where midwives, families, and communities of color thrive.

MISSION

Invest in Black, Indigenous, people of color led birth centers to grow and sustain community birth infrastructure for generations.



Photo: Leilani Rogers

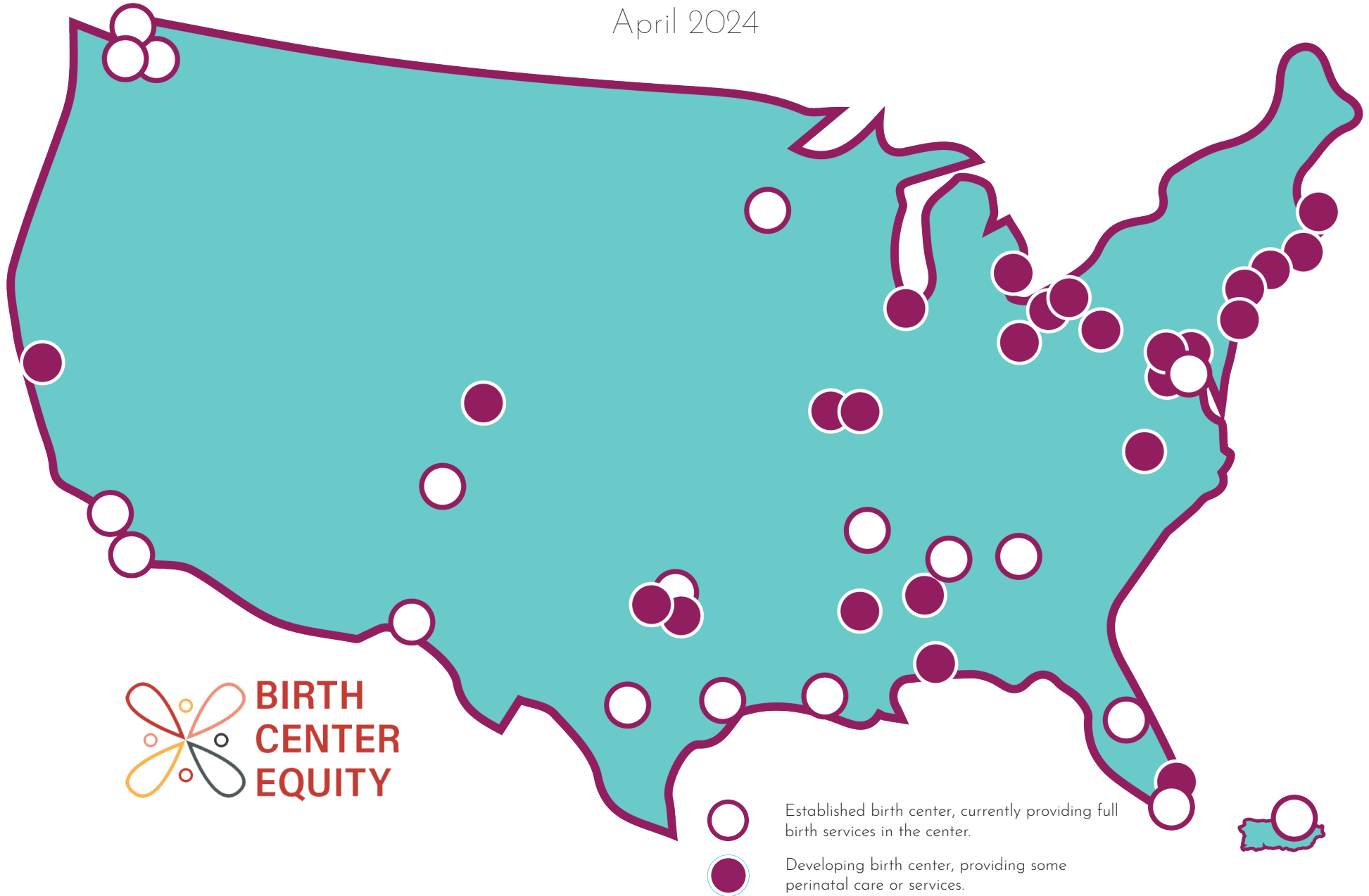
BCE VALUES

- 1. SAFETY** - All Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) deserve safe birth spaces and safe birth care, as well as safe spaces that support our growth, leadership, and relationships. Ensuring our safety includes healing and reparation of harm and inequity in maternal health practices, structures and systems (including inequitable access to capital) that have oppressed our communities. Ensuring our safety also includes healing and reparation within our networks and organizations and treating one another with respect, grace, and kindness.
- 2. ABUNDANCE** - With trusted relationships and solidarity come abundant resources to grow and sustain BIPOC community-owned and led birth infrastructure, and realize beloved economy. Beloved economy rejects scarcity, supremacy and resource hoarding; and instead centers care, liberatory relationships, abundance, community wealth and power building.
- 3. LIBERATION** - Safe, loving, and liberatory birth for all birthing people is essential to racial, gender, and reproductive justice. BCE honors the human right to bodily autonomy, to have and to not have children, to parent in a safe, healthy, nonviolent environment, and the rights to self-definition and sexual freedom. (See Sister Song Reproductive Justice declaration.) We believe that leading together in our own care is an act of liberation, and that honoring birth as a chosen sacred transformative experience at every level (individual, organization, community, culture) will transform birth culture for all.



BIRTH CENTER EQUITY NETWORK

April 2024



1. IMPACT 2023

BCE Infused \$1.1 M into Community Birth Centers

STRENGTHENED BIRTH CENTERS

In 2023, Birth Center Equity invested our largest amount ever in grants to birth centers led by Black, Indigenous, people of color. Our total awards to BIPOC-led community birth centers in 2023 was \$1,112,000.

Through the 2023 awards, BCE strengthened and grew access to community birth center care in 12 communities:

- ◆ Atlanta, GA: Atlanta Birth Center
- ◆ Detroit, MI: Birth Detroit
- ◆ Dallas, TX: Lover's Lane Birth Center, Inc
- ◆ Durham, NC: Aya Birth Center and Community Wellness
- ◆ Espanola, NM: Breath of My Heart Birthplace
- ◆ Los Angeles, CA: Kindred Space LA
- ◆ San Diego, CA: San Diego Community Birth Center
- ◆ El Paso, TX: Luna Tierra Casa de Partos LLC
- ◆ North Miami Beach, FL: Magnolia Birth House
- ◆ Seattle, WA: Rainier Valley Birth & Health Center, Federal Way Birth Center
- ◆ San Juan, PR: Centro MAM, Asociación de Parteras de Puerto Rico



2. IMPACT 2023

BCE Strengthened Network & Relationships

GREW NETWORK

The BCE Network grew from from 14 community birth centers in 2020 to 40 in 2023.

GREW RELATIONSHIPS & STRATEGY

On April 24-25, 2023 nearly 60 of Birth Center Equity's community birth center leaders came together from across the country to New Orleans, LA for Birth Center Equity's first-ever gathering, "Birthing Beloved Economy." Held at the Black-woman owned NOPSI hotel, Birthing Beloved Economy included workshops and discussions exploring how community birth is crucial to reclaiming, restoring, and generating community abundance in all its economic, cultural, and political dimensions. Over these days, BCE network members nurtured a loving and nourishing space for wisdom sharing, storytelling, networking, and fortifying relationships.



Photo: Leilani Rogers



3. IMPACT 2023

BCE Grew Community Birth Center Visibility

GREW MEDIA VISIBILITY & REACH

BCE reached an estimated 1 million+ readers with Leseliey Welch featured in CNN's "Women of Color Birth Centers," (December, 2023). BCE reached an estimated 50,000+ readers with "Birthing Black: Community Birth Centers as Portals to Gentle Futures" published in Nonprofit Quarterly, January 2023.

In 2023, BCE reached over 4,000 online viewers with Birth Center Week's Midwifing Justice video. BCE increased our IG followers by 152%.

LAUNCHED BIRTH CENTER WEEK

BCE launched the first-ever Birth Center Week September 14-20, 2023. The purpose of the annual Birth Center Week is to celebrate and elevate the impact and potential of birth centers, with a focus on community birth centers that provide safe, culturally-reverent, midwifery-led health care for all. Birth Center Week is growing the collective cultural, economic, and political power of community birth centers led by Black, Indigenous, people of color.



Midwifing Justice video artwork by Molly Crabapple/Sharp As Knives



BIRTH CENTER EQUITY NETWORK

(April 2024)

A Mother's Choice (Colorado Springs, CO)
Abide Women's Health Services (Dallas, TX)
Alabama Birth Center (Huntsville, AL)
Allegheny Reproductive Health Center (Pittsburgh, PA)
Atlanta Birth Center (Atlanta, GA)*
Aya Birth and Community Wellness (Durham, NC)
Baby Catcher Birth Center (Lafayette, LA)*
Birth and Milk Company LLC (Washington, DC)
Birth Detroit (Detroit, MI)
Birth of a Nation (Cleveland, OH)
Birth Sanctuary Gainesville (Gainesville, AL)
Birther Supporters United (Washington, DC)
Birthing Beautiful Communities (Cleveland, OH)
Birthland (Oakland, CA)
Breath of My Heart Birthplace (Española, NM)*
CHOICES Center for Reproductive Health (Memphis, TN)*
Community Birth Center (Lacey, WA)*
Community of Hope (Washington, DC)*
Federal Way Birth Center (Federal Way, WA)*
Haven Midwifery Birthing Center (Brooklyn, NY)
Jamaa Birth Village (Ferguson, MO)
Kindred Space LA (Los Angeles, CA)*

Lovers Lane Birth Center (Richardson, TX)*
Luna Tierra Birth Center (El Paso, TX)*
Magnolia Birth House (North Miami Beach, FL)*
Mamatoto Village (Washington, DC)
Centro Clinica MAM - Madres Ayudando a Madres (San Juan, PR)*
Midwife Mobile Clinic (Miami, FL)
My Sister's Keeper (Hurst, TX)
Neighborhood Birth Center (Boston, MA)
Oasis Family Birthing Center (Birmingham, AL)*
One Love Midwifery and Community Consortium (Long Island, NY)
Rainier Valley Birth & Health Center (Seattle & Renton, WA)*
Roots Community Birth Center (Minneapolis, MN)*
ROOTT - Restoring Our Own Through Transformation (Columbus, OH)
San Antonio Nurse Midwife (San Antonio, TX)*
San Diego Community Birth Center (San Diego, CA)*
Serenity Midwifery and Birth Center (Forreston, TX)
Sisters in Birth (Jackson, MS)
Chicago Southside Birth Center (Chicago, IL)
The Birth Place (Winter Garden, FL)*
The Birthing Place (Bronx, NY)
The Birthing Place (Houston, TX)*
Urban Perinatal Education Center (Pawtucket, RI)

**Established birth center, currently providing full birth services in the center. (All others are developing birth centers, providing some perinatal care or other services.)*

THANK YOU

Birth Center Equity wishes to thank all the foundations and donors who have strengthened us with their generous support.



Birth Center Equity Team: Leseliey Welch, Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder; Denicia Cadena, Operations & Impact Director; Diana Derige, Chief Strategy Officer; Gianna Fay, Municipal Birth Center Project Midwifery Director; Hoai An Pham, Social Media Coordinator; Jess Gutfreund, Chief Implementation Officer; Joe Snow, Municipal Birth Center Project Consultant; Julie Quiroz, Narrative Strategy Director; Kimberly Durdin, Midwifery Network Engagement Director; Yve Francois, Chief of Staff.

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