



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Crow Wing County WIC celebrates World Breastfeeding Week**

The Crow Wing County WIC Program is celebrating Minnesota Breastfeeding Awareness Month in August and [World Breastfeeding Week](#), Aug. 1-7. This year's theme focuses on "Breastfeeding: Foundation of Life." The week helps raise awareness of the importance of breastfeeding for both babies and mothers and calls attention to local efforts that support breastfeeding.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, breastfeeding is the standard for infant feeding. It provides essential nutrients and antibodies that boost an infant's immune system, providing protection from childhood illnesses. Babies who are not breastfed are more likely to develop common childhood illnesses like ear infections and diarrhea as well as chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, asthma and childhood obesity.

"Breastfeeding helps children get off to a healthy start," said Erica Schmid, WIC Breastfeeding Program Coordinator. "It's the foundation of life."

Breastfeeding is important for mothers, too. Women who breastfeed have a reduced risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer and osteoporosis. Increasing exclusive breastfeeding rates is one of the goals outlined in the [Healthy Minnesota 2020](#) framework to improve health and reduce health disparities across the state.

More than 89 percent of Minnesota moms start breastfeeding, but at 6 months that drops to 35 percent, according to the latest [Centers for Disease Control Breastfeeding Report Card](#). Less than half of Minnesota infants are exclusively breastfed at 3 months. Infants who receive formula in the hospital after birth are more likely to stop breastfeeding by 3 months than those who receive only breastmilk. Challenges women face to meet their breastfeeding goals include those they experience in health care settings, worksites and child care centers.

That's changing in Minnesota. Thanks to the efforts by leadership within many organizations, WIC and the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP), growing numbers of health care, child care, employers and health departments are working to address the barriers and make breastfeeding easier for new mothers. Crow Wing County WIC supports breastfeeding by helping community businesses create a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.

**Our Vision:** Being Minnesota's favorite place.

**Our Mission:** Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.

**Our Values:** Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

By making breastfeeding easier, mothers can reach their goals and give their babies the best possible start in life. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recognizes those who take steps to provide accommodations and support for women who would like to breastfeed or continue to breastfeed after returning to work or school. Visit the [MDH Breastfeeding Friendly Recognition Program](#) website for more details.

For more information, contact Erica Schmid at 218.824.1082.

Community Services administers more than seventy federal and state benefit and assistance services and programs to residents in Crow Wing County. The Department is dedicated to providing excellent service and efficient management in performing its mission of promoting and protecting the health, well-being and self-sufficiency of all Crow Wing County residents.

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