Introduction
Our Needs Assessment found the top three needs facing resource limited mothers and children in New London County were:
- Lack of access to affordable healthy food
- Perinatal mental health
- Lack of support for breastfeeding

Activities
- Trained 68 Certified Lactation Consultants (CLCs) within our county’s pediatric & obstetrician offices, and home visiting agencies
- Opened Connecticut’s first BabyCafe
- Worked with businesses to implement Mother Friendly Policies, and/or achieve Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite designation
- Print & social media campaign –-magicmilk
- Opening a breast milk bank depot at a partner agency
- Coordinated a Nurturing Station for use by local agencies
- Conducted literature review on the cultural influences & practices around breastfeeding
- Hosted community forums about the status of how breastfeeding friendly our county is, and how businesses can support breastfeeding
- Developing a ‘Breastfeeding 101’ training for WIC staff
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Outcomes
- By collaborating with our local hospital and health department, we have been able to add ‘improving breastfeeding duration rates’ as a strategy to their Community Health Improvement Plan.
- New London County has 68 more CLCs now!
- Our Nurturing Station is now available for any agency to borrow for their community events. This provides a safe space to breastfeed, while also providing education and normalizing breastfeeding.
- Our Baby Café meets once per week at a local library and has been able to support many moms – both socially and with professional lactation support.
- Our Breastfeeding Champions help spread our breastfeeding messages to their respective sectors – healthcare, business, schools, etc.
- We have hosted two forums to share best practices, hear about what others are doing to support breastfeeding, and share ways agencies can work together to make New London County a more breastfeeding friendly community.
- We created a toolkit to inform and encourage businesses to become a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite. Many new businesses have adopted mother friendly policies, and some have achieved our Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition’s designation of, “Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite.”
- We’re creating a mentoring program through our Chamber of Commerce for new businesses to reach out to those who have already gone through the process of bringing mother friendly policies to their places of employment.

Next Steps
In order to keep our Baby Café up and running for the next year, we have been applying to grants to fund at least one CLC for a few hours a week to continue running the Café with our WIC Peer Counselor.

Lessons Learned
Mothers report not liking the wording, “support group” as that implies they have a problem. As we searched for other formats, we found Baby Cafe which combines the same peer support, and also includes access to professional support. Baby Cafes are required to be staffed by a minimum number of lactation professionals.

Best Practices
Baby Cafés – combine both the Surgeon General’s and CDC’s recommendations to strengthen peer support programs, and increase access to professional lactation support.

Certified Lactation Counselors – this grant enabled us to facilitate 68 pediatric/OB providers/staff, and home visitors to become certified as CLCs. Increasing access to CLCs within the first few weeks of breastfeeding increases duration rates of breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding Friendly Worksites – women cite returning to work and a lack of support as the top two reasons they do not reach their breastfeeding goals. Working with businesses to encourage the adoption of policies making it as easy as possible for women to transition back from maternity leave is beneficial to both mom and the business’ bottom line.

Great Resources: “The CDC Guide to Strategies to Support Breastfeeding Mothers and Babies,” and “The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding”

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