

North Star

Zero racial disparities in infant mortality by 2033.

High Infant Mortality Zip Codes



This project served participants in the following FLOURISH priority zip codes:

**63107, 63113, 63115,
63118, 63120, 63133,
63136, 63147**

How much did we do?



31

Community outreach events



14

Individuals attended doula training



Childbirth education and doula training consisted of 14 online modules and a 3 day in-person training

Program Description

This FLOURISH grant funded the African Doula Project. This project led a doula training program that recruited new caregivers with self-sustaining economic opportunities, while providing childbirth education through community outreach in north St. Louis. The program included 14 online study modules, a three day in person training and five business development workshops. This project took place from November 2021 to October 2022.

Priority Areas

FLOURISH Community Leaders Cabinet identified priority areas they believe will have the most significant impact on improving conditions for Black families. Infant mortality is a complex issue that can't be solved by one organization alone. Below, you will find population level data where FLOURISH is contributing to changes for Black families alongside other organizations. African Doula Project is working to move the needle for the individuals they serve in the areas listed below.

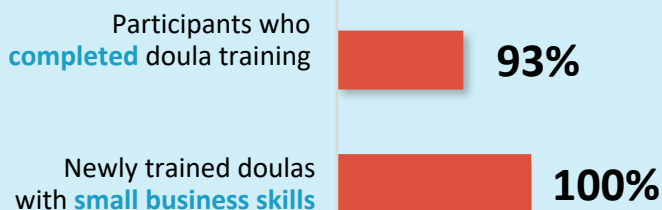
FLOURISH Priority Area	Category of Work	Population Level Data
Coordinated Quality Care	Doulas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional support through all stages of birth Advocacy for Patient through All Stages of Birth



FLOURISH uses a **results-based accountability** model of evaluation, because it helps show how collaborative efforts can make an impact on reducing disparities in infant mortality. We focus on how well programs address root causes of the issue and whether Black pregnant and parenting families are better off.

How well did we do it?

Percent of...



Is anyone better off?

100%

of doulas are better equipped to provide **maternal and infant health support**

Project Impact

The program trained 14 women in doula practices and knowledge and offered business training with a comprehensive business development manual to all the women who participated. The continued mentoring will allow for the students to be certified. This will increase the number of doulas in the city of St. Louis who can serve pregnant and parenting families. It has been proven that women who have a birth doula have better and healthier birthing experiences.

Project Highlights

The doula students received continued mentoring to receive a certification. They also became a cohort helping each other with their training and staying connected after the training to facilitate the development of their businesses and services.

Many of the women are interested in supporting and becoming a part of the Uhuru Wa Kulea Women's Center in North St. Louis which is being funded at this time. This Center will offer health and wellness services to Black women in St. Louis.

What We Learned

We learned that nearly every Black woman has a similar story to tell about childbirth and pregnancy. The need for Black community centered training and resources is great in St. Louis. The desire for the community to come together to create and provide these services is very strong.

Challenges

1. The relationship with the initial training partner for this program had to be severed, which included a financial cost. This postponed the training dates, which meant less time to work with all the students together to continue their path to assisting with births and working to get their certifications. Because of the change in dates, some women could not continue with the training, although others were recruited. Ultimately, we were able to secure a partnership with a nationally renowned midwife program that conducted all the doula trainings successfully and beautifully in one group setting over three days.
2. Many women in the community face economic challenges and the challenges of being parents. Together the women overcame many of these challenges out of a deep desire to participate in this program.



FLOURISH St. Louis, an infant mortality reduction initiative powered by Generate Health, is bringing together people and organizations across the region to fix the systems that impact the health of Black families. African Doula Project received a FLOURISH grant which was funded by Missouri Foundation for Health.

For more information visit https://blackpowerblueprint.org/african_doula/ or contact info@flourishstlouis.org