



RHIG | University of California Los Angeles
Reproductive Health Interest Group

Creating Space: Lactation Support and the Breastfeeding Climate at UCLA

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Significance

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a minimum of 6 months of exclusive of breastfeeding, adding complementary foods at 6 months with continued breastfeeding for at least 1 year.
- Comfortable access to breastfeeding spaces ensures gender equity in the workplace.
- Breastfeeding accommodation is also a legal requirement of universities.
- Lack of appropriate spaces for breastfeeding hinders women from exercising their legal rights and impacts the health outcomes of mothers and children.

Project Description

In Fall 2015, RHIG identified through eyewitness accounts a **lack of coordinated information, education, and support on lactation and breastfeeding** on the UCLA campus.

These observations led to *Creating Space* a program aimed at improving UCLA lactation facilities and support for breastfeeding.

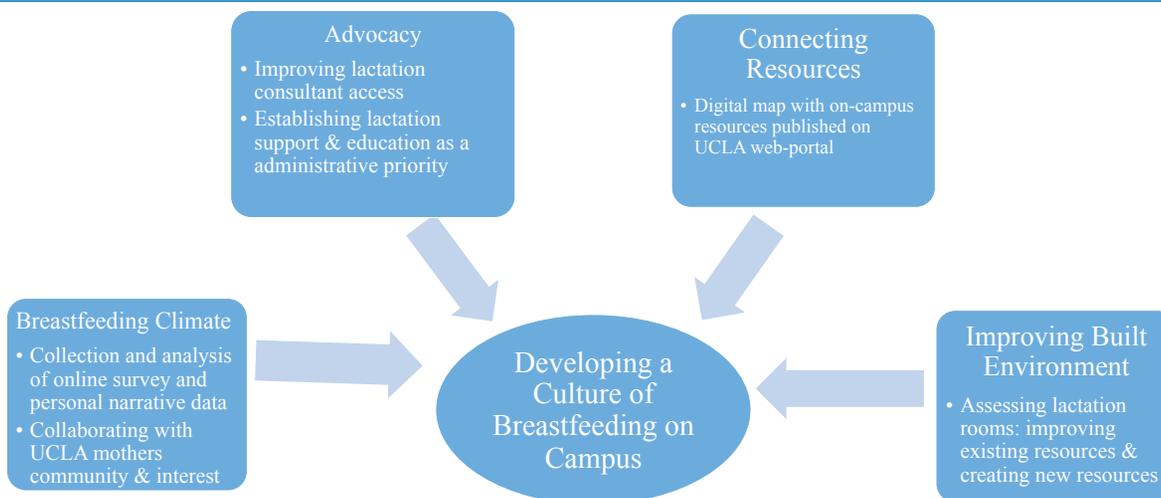
The Creating Space program targets:

- **Built Environment:** Making lactation rooms accessible, appropriate, and comfortable.
- **Advocacy:** Focusing on UCLA administration and ASHE Student Health & Wellness Center to prioritize breastfeeding.
- **Breastfeeding Climate:** Launching a survey for breastfeeding individuals on campus to understand the existing breastfeeding support and gaps.
- **Connecting Resources:** Development of an online campus map with all the lactation support resources on campus

Methods

Beginning in Fall 2015- present, a collaborative multi-prong approach to the project began with collaboration with Mothers of Color de Academia and the Student Union.

- ✓ A 20 question online survey has been developed and distributed through campus channels including faculty, student and employee listservs.
- ✓ A space check-list was developed to assess lactation rooms across campus
- ✓ Advocacy efforts included:
 - Coalition building with similar organizations
 - Petitions calling for greater need for lactation services
 - Research on the UCLA political/economic breastfeeding climate, lactation consultants in LA, and coordination with insurance.



Future Directions

- Analysis of breastfeeding climate survey with report presented to interested parties.
- The breastfeeding climate survey will be used as a baseline informational tool to inform the project.
- A full survey on all lactation rooms on campus will be conducted.
- Creating and presenting a report given to administration from UCLA and ASHE Student Health & Wellness Center.
- Further work on support for lactation through insurance and the greater UCLA health system will be conducted.

Who are RHIG?

The **Reproductive Health Interest Group** is a graduate student-led reproductive advocacy group in the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health. Founded in 2002, RHIG brings together students, faculty, staff, and community members to discuss, learn and engage in social justice projects related to reproductive health, justice and rights broadly.

Conclusions

- Mothers and children are an important part of the UCLA community.
- Comfortable, hygienic, spaces for breastfeeding are a legal right of all individuals on UCLA's campus.
- However, as a University focused on social-justice, we can also strive to make these spaces beautiful and stress-free.
- As *Creating Space* continues it's partnerships our goal is to provide evidence-based information and bolster the voice of working and student mothers and improve the culture of breastfeeding at UCLA.
- We hope to solidify administrative support for lactation and the larger issues of women's health and empowerment at UCLA

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