

## **Operation Threshold Receives Grant from the National WIC Association**

**WATERLOO, IA:** We are honored to announce that Operation Threshold's (OT) WIC program is one of just four in the nation to receive a Catalyzing Retention Efforts in WIC (CREW) grant. The purpose of the grant is to develop a participant retention strategy. OT's WIC program will develop a breastfeeding outreach program specifically designed to reach pregnant women of color. The project will include initiatives related to outreach, breastfeeding support, nutrition education, food package education, and staff education. The goal of the project is to increase breastfeeding rates among women of color by better meeting the needs of our WIC participants and providing services in a culturally sensitive and trauma-informed manner.

"We are excited to be given the opportunity to develop a breastfeeding outreach program for women of color," said Amanda Kirchhoff, Operation Threshold WIC Director. "Breastfeeding has many benefits for both infants and moms," she continues, "increasing the breastfeeding rate among women of color will have positive lifelong impacts for both mothers and their babies."

Operation Threshold received the grant from the National WIC Association, who received funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to explore ways to increase participation and retention in the WIC program.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Operation Threshold's lobbies remain closed and OT WIC will continue to provide services virtually, at least until September 30. Even so, staff are still available via phone, video chat, or email. WIC staff continue to enroll participants, provide educational services, and load food packages onto the WIC EBT cards.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a program available in every county in Iowa and throughout all 50 states. The program serves income qualifying women who are pregnant, women who are breastfeeding up to one-year post-partum, women who are not breastfeeding up to six months post-partum, infants, and children up to five years old.

Currently, Operation Threshold's WIC program provides nutrition education and assistance to nearly 5,000 women, infants, and children each month, serving residents of Black Hawk, Buchanan, Grundy, Benton, Bremer, and Chickasaw Counties.

Anyone who is interested in the CREW project or would like to be involved, please contact Amanda Kirchhoff at (319) 292-1827 or [akirchhoff@operationthreshold.org](mailto:akirchhoff@operationthreshold.org). For more information on WIC services or how to enroll, call (319) 291-2065.

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