



The Sankofa Reproductive Health and Healing Center is an official Perinatal Safe Spot dedicated to providing community-led reproductive healthcare and healing. This model of care was founded by midwife and activist, Jennie Joseph as a grassroots response to persistently high maternal mortality and morbidity for women of color, particularly for Black women. The Sankofa Center offers full spectrum doula support, community doula-led childbirth & parenting education, breastfeeding support, advocacy, reproductive health counseling, and easy access entry points into healthcare for Black, Brown & indigenous birthing families. Community-based Doula Care is a high-impact collaborative approach to supporting families that has existed in our community for years.

Project Title: Sankofa Community-Based Doula Care and Lead Awareness Expansion Project

Lead Organization: Village Birth International & Sankofa Reproductive Health & Healing Center

Participating Organizations: Village Birth & Sankofa Reproductive Health & Healing, Doula 4 a Queen, zenG Wellness, Cafe Sankofa

Project Description:

To incorporate lead awareness & testing opportunities into the community care, pregnancy and postpartum education and support already happening at the Sankofa Reproductive Health & Healing Center. This Healing Center is a community collaboration between Village Birth International, Doula 4 a Queen, zenG Wellness, and a collective of Black community-based doulas in Syracuse New York. Our aim is to build a longstanding extension of services for community-based doula care that highlights lead awareness and testing as a reproductive justice necessity. This funding will build the necessary infrastructure needed for longstanding lead awareness and community engagement that extends doula support, preventive education before childbirth for mothers, perinatal resource support, nutrition and community connection. Community-based doula care reflects an organized, collective framework where Black, African immigrant/refugee, Latinx, Indigenous or historically underserved individuals formalize and implement programs with the specific aim of serving their own communities. Fundamental values of support are rooted in individual wisdom and self-determination. These programs are culturally infused, generationally informed, and responsive to years of ongoing oppression resulting in trauma informed actions that pull families together in crisis. For this reason our

existing programs are well suited to build out lead awareness, testing, education and prevention for families and children most at risk for lead exposure.

Project Objectives:Lead awareness begins with education and prevention. This project seeks to use community-based doula care as an avenue of engagement and peer to peer community-led wellness. Our Community- based doulas and Perinatal Safe Spot model of care offers cultural reflective support that includes access, informed decision making, self-determination and knowledge sharing as a solution to health disparities. This model ensures families have the tools they need to make optimal healthcare choices and advocate for their children. Expanding this model of care will serve as a framework to increase lead awareness, prevention, testing and resource connection for mothers and children.

1. Lead Prevention & Awareness: Pregnancy and Postpartum Education - funding will support Doula-led education to incorporate lead awareness and prevention into prenatal education classes and postpartum support groups
2. Sankofa postpartum services expanded to at least the first year of life for lead awareness, testing and follow up of all children/siblings in individual families ages 1-5.
3. Doula training for Lead Awareness to train 3 - 4 additional community-based doulas from communities most affected by lead poisoning and exposure.
4. Lead testing **to be coordinated with the Onondaga County Health Department** once per month at Wellness Wednesdays program.
5. Sankofa Perinatal Health Specialist, along with doulas, will offer ongoing education and follow up support or referral to medical or community services for affected families. Families with mothers and children with high lead levels will be followed by the Perinatal health specialist for continuity of care, medical engagement,

Projected Outputs:

- Increase culturally congruent and community-led awareness for pregnant mothers and families in our networks. Zip codes in Onondaga County where Sankofa serves- including 13209, 13208, 13204, 13205 and 13207- are defined as “maternal health hot spots” by Maternal and Child Health Data in Central New York.
- 250-300 families reached across all levels of engagement including community-based doula care, annual events, monthly resources closets, and social media campaigns.
- Train existing doula workforce (6 doulas) to incorporate Lead education and awareness to engagement.
- Recruit and train 4-5 additional community-based doulas to increase engagement. Increased peer to peer support through home visitations and Perinatal Health Specialist connections.

Projected Outcomes:

- Increase lead testing accessibility and availability to families with children ages 1-5 where Sankofa serves- including 13209, 13208, 13204, 13205 and 13207.

- 100% of lead affected families identified through this program will receive supportive community-based doula care, connection and advocacy to resources and follow up education with the Perinatal Health Specialist.
- Expansion of community-based doula workforce to serve more families facing all reproductive injustices, including lead exposure Create permanent, cross-sectoral collaboration and connections between the Sankofa Reproductive Health and Healing Center and local maternal health agencies.

Budget Breakdown :

Expense	Cost	Rationale
Community Based Doula training	\$10,000	Recruitment/training/mentorship
Continuing Education of Existing Doulas	\$1,500	Maternal and Family support
Postpartum & Community based Doula Care Expansion	\$65,000	8 visits \$200/each for 300 additional visits
Perinatal Health program Expansion	\$45,000	
Community Lead Education	\$12,000	Curriculum, teaching, outreach and engagement
Marketing and Social Media Campaign	\$8,000	Lead Awareness campaign
Total	\$141, 500	