



Inside Breastfeeding USA

February 2019

I. Greetings from the Board of Directors

As you know, Breastfeeding USA unveiled our [strategic plan for FY19-FY21](#) last November. We are excited about the continued growth of our organization and look forward to putting into action the goals outlined in that document.

Goal 3 (Fostering Community) calls for the development of an internal monthly newsletter to keep Breastfeeding Counselors updated on Breastfeeding USA. This serves as the first of these. If you are interested in volunteering to help edit this newsletter, please see the call for volunteers below.

We intend to open each month with a brief update and/or message from the board followed by updates from select committees; embedded in these reports will be notes on progress towards strategic plan goals.

We'll conclude our newsletter with volunteer news (including a volunteer spotlight and calls for volunteers); volunteers are the heart of our organization and we want to continue to find ways to honor and recognize this work.

We imagine this newsletter will evolve in the coming year; we hope that you find it a useful communication.

From the President

Life comes at you fast. I've been with Breastfeeding USA in some capacity since I joined it on the day it was launched in December 2011. I've served on the board since 2014, a step driven half by my continued desire to support the organization and half by a few friends twisting my arm to be nominated. You might think all these years of experience would leave me feeling prepared now to serve this organization as its board's president ... and I guess you would be about half right. I'm excited and honored ... and I'm also more than a little trepidatious. Am I up to this task? How can I know?

Do we ever *really* feel prepared for life's next big challenge? Or fully qualified to serve when called to do so?

Years ago, I was trying to persuade an experienced breastfeeding mother that she would make a fabulous volunteer mother support counselor. She protested that her kids were still keeping her up half the night and the house was always a mess and she clearly didn't have it all together like the rest of us did. I smiled to myself, thinking of the dust bunnies and dirty dishes in my home at that very moment, and the frantic search I'd undertaken to find a shirt clean enough to wear to our meeting.

Then she finally got to the heart of the matter and confessed that she didn't feel qualified to support other mothers when her own mothering, in her eyes at least, so often fell short of ideal.

So I shared with her my own secret: **I am grateful every day that I don't have to be perfect to help other people.**

In fact, I've found that often it is in trusting others with our vulnerabilities—our dust bunnies, our doubts—that we end up bringing out the best in each other.

Breastfeeding USA is going through big changes. Some long planned and hoped for, others out of left field. I'm proud and honored to be trusted with an important leadership role in the midst of these changes. I can't promise to be perfect, and I certainly don't expect anyone else to be. But I can—and do—promise to show up, to listen, to discern, to act ... to lead. It's not a magic wand. It's not a guarantee. But it is a commitment.

Come join us. Come as you are, not as you might be on some future imagined day when you'll have it all together and be super qualified. Show up with your passion for our mission, your willingness to learn, your commitment to lift others up and be inspired by them in turn. We need you.

--Rebecca Ruhlen, President and BC

Upcoming Events

- March 12, 8-9pm Eastern - 2nd Reading of the Bylaws; Zoom link and details to follow by email.

II. From Committees

The following committees have updates to share with volunteers this month.

Advocacy

Interim Chair: Jada Wright-Nichols (Advocacy@BreastfeedingUSA.org)

We are continuing our membership in the United States Breastfeeding Committee and recently participated in the Welcome Week for Congress. Breastfeeding USA will also have a presence at USBC's Ninth National Breastfeeding Conference and Convening in June.

We look forward to other lobbying efforts in the coming year.

Jada Wright-Nichols and Meredith Sinclair will be attending the upcoming *Breastfeeding and Feminism Conference* in Chapel Hill, NC (Jada is also presenting!); we look forward to this opportunity to represent Breastfeeding USA and network with the breastfeeding community.

Communications

Interim Chair: Meredith Sinclair (meredith.sinclair@breastfeedingusa.org)

Communications is seeking volunteers with social media, writing, and/or editing skills to help build our internal and external communications capacity. See the job calls below for more details.

As one action step of Strategic Plan Goal 1 (Deploy Technology Strategically), Communications in coordination with Volunteer Services and IT will be implementing guidelines for use and moderation of BC Discussion. This will reduce the number of emails that BCs receive daily and will help re-route queries to the appropriate committee or workgroup. This document also includes the previously shared guidelines for the BC Facebook Chat.

Education

Chair: Sharon Knorr (Education@BreastfeedingUSA.org)

As of the end of January, 199 candidates are enrolled in the comprehensive course. Module 4 is now open in LearnWorlds, and the orientation module is in the final stage of revision. With these last steps in the transition of our course from Moodle to LearnWorld, a years-long goal to improve the candidate experience and volunteer workload of our course is on the verge of completion, reopening the pipeline from candidacy to accreditation.

Heartfelt thanks to the Education Committee, particularly Karyn DiNovo, for their work during this immense project.

Finance

Chair: Amie Hood (Finance@BreastfeedingUSA.org)

We are formally re-staffing the Finance Committee as part of meeting Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan and in keeping with existing policy. Many thanks to Ginger Gorrell (Bookkeeping), Nicky Prince (Receiving), Aimee Teslaw (Funding & Development), and Patty Jacobs (Accounting and Compliance) for their continued work in Finance to help keep Breastfeeding USA fiscally healthy.

Funding and Development

Chair: Aimee Teslaw (Funding@BreastfeedingUSA.org)

We are happy to announce our calendar year ended with two successful fundraising efforts:

- Giving Tuesday in November raised over \$2,800 for Breastfeeding USA. We are grateful to Nancy Mohrbacher for donating 10 copies of *Working and Breastfeeding Made Simple* to incentivize our BCs to participate in fundraising.
- Our year-end fundraiser, including the donor match, raised over \$2,200! We offer warm thanks to the founder whose generous \$1,000 match inspired over a dozen more people to give generously at the end of the year.

We'd like to thank again our donors, as well as Aimee Teslaw and Nicole Florek for their work on this effort, and all the BCs, volunteers, and families who participated in our fundraising.

Volunteer Services

Chair: Krista Clayton (VolunteerSupport@BreastfeedingUSA.org)

Understaffing and life crises, large and small, have slowed some of VS's work recently. We are fortunate that BC Support has an able new manager, Gina Guariglia Kelly, and appreciate the work she and all the regional reps do day in and day out to help BCs pursue our mission in their own communities.

One task that has been interrupted by changes in staffing this past year is the manual transfer of complete CCAR data from the many submitted Google forms to the website, where BCs can see which months' CCARs have been received and processed. Please be assured that this work will be completed, hopefully with a more streamlined procedure to save volunteer labor.

As we pursue strategic plan goal #3 (which includes shifting to a culture of recognition and positive reinforcement), we anticipate continuing to change some of the ways we collect and use CCAR data organization-wide. For now, you are encouraged to continue [submitting your monthly CCAR](#) and to save the copy of your responses that is automatically emailed to you for each submission.

III. Volunteer News

Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteers are what make Breastfeeding USA's work possible! If you'd like to nominate the work of a volunteer for our volunteer spotlight, please contact Meredith Sinclair (meredith.sinclair@breastfeedingusa.org).

This month, we are pleased to announce Nicole Florek as the new editor of #milkmemos.



My name is Nicole Florek, and I am the mother of a very rambunctious 21 month old girl. My breastfeeding experience has gone great so far, and we are still breastfeeding as of today. I have been inspired to be a BC with Breastfeeding USA because of the mission along side the fact that I was searching for a way to provide breastfeeding support in my local area. Aside from Breastfeeding USA, I am the owner of Nicole Marie Counseling, in which I specialize in perinatal, infant, and toddler

mental health but I do also work heavily with children. I wanted my counseling practice to focus on women because of the birth trauma I experienced, and the lack of breastfeeding friendly advice there is for women who are suffering with PPD. I am excited to be a part of Breastfeeding USA, and hope to continue getting a chance to advocate for breastfeeding and Breastfeeding USA as an organization.

Welcome to Nicole!

Volunteers Needed

We hope you will consider the following organization needs for a match with your time and talents. If you have interest in tasks not listed here, please contact Krista Clayton of Volunteer Services (VolunteerSupport@BreastfeedingUSA.org) or complete [this interest form](#).

Technology:

The Board is still looking to fill the **IT Chair** position. In the meantime, we are also looking for people who would enjoy helping in IT for a few hours a week. We will train willing volunteers to perform specific ongoing tasks that are necessary for Breastfeeding USA's operations.

If you have questions or are interested, please contact Ginger Gorrell (ginger.gorrell@breastfeedingusa.org).

Communications:

The Breastfeeding USA Communications Committee is looking for additional members for our **social media workgroup**. Currently, we maintain a presence on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#); we plan to reboot our Instagram presence in the coming months.

Tasks in this workgroup include:

- Curating external content that may be of interest to our social media followers. This involves identifying items to share, participating in the vetting process, and creating a header “hook” to go with that content.
- Monitoring our social media accounts for comments and shares; assisting with responses to messages via social media.
- Connecting with like-minded organizations and breastfeeding advocacy efforts via social media.
- Developing campaigns with original Breastfeeding USA content.
- Engaging readers with questions.

We are in particular need of one or more BCs who are **Instagram** “savvy” who would be willing to take the lead on building our presence on that platform.

We'd also welcome volunteers with **meme-creation** skills - experience working with graphics, images, etc - to help us create eye-catching images for social media and other marketing.

Newsletter Writers/Editors: The strategic plan calls for the development of an inward facing newsletter (like this one!) and the expansion of the public facing #milkmemos to a monthly publication. To work towards these goals, we need volunteers interested in curating content, writing content, and editing/assembling content.

If you have questions or are interested in any of the above tasks, please contact Meredith Sinclair (meredith.sinclair@breastfeedingusa.org).

The Breastfeeding USA Editorial Review Board (ERB) is seeking new workgroup members. This workgroup is responsible for editing and vetting Breastfeeding USA original content for the website and social media.

We particularly need volunteers who have strong editing skills or who are IBCLCs and able to vet content.

If you have questions or would like to join this workgroup, please contact Gena Ortega (gena.ortega@breastfeedingusa.org).

Funding and Development

Do you enjoy communicating with and motivating others? Join the Funding and Development team! We are looking for a **Funding and Development assistant**, and while fundraising experience is a bonus, much of this work can be learned on the go with the right attitude and some excellent communications skills. The assistant will spearhead funding campaigns like #GivingTuesday and the end-of-year campaign from start to finish, creating emails, social media posts, and working with fun incentives, all with the aim of sharing our enthusiasm for Breastfeeding USA and encouraging our stakeholders to donate to the organization. This is a great position for anyone looking to have a future leadership role in the organization.

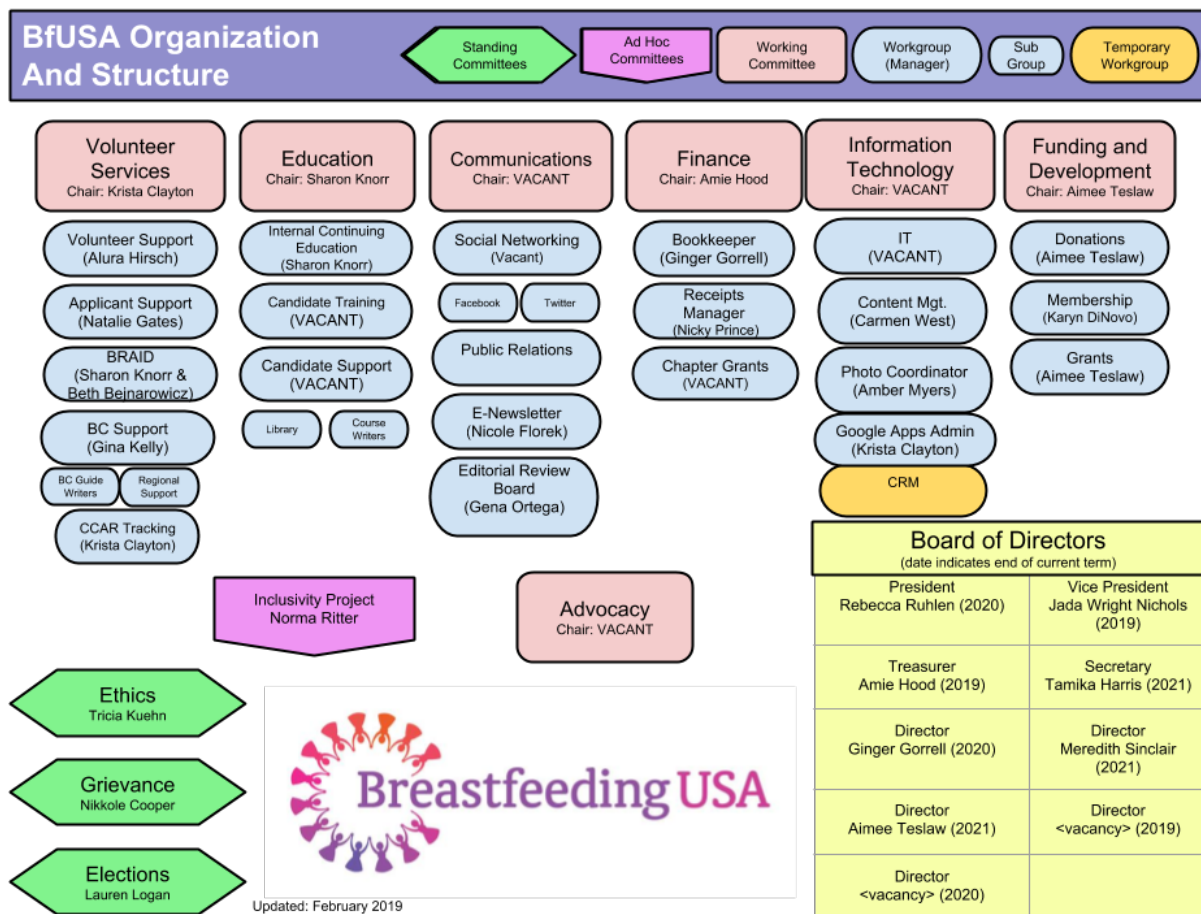
We are also looking for a **Grant Writer**. A key goal of Breastfeeding USA's strategic plan is to strengthen the organization's financial position over the next few years, and this includes the development and implementation of a grant writing strategy. If you have skills and experience in this arena, come join us in Funding and Development.

Direct your questions about these positions to Aimee Teslaw (aimee.teslaw@breastfeedingusa.org).

Finance

Finance is seeking volunteers experienced in **bookkeeping, accounting, and/or non-profit finance**, or who would be interested in learning the ropes. Contact Amie Hood (Finance@BreastfeedingUSA.org) to learn more.

Organization Contacts



Committee	Email	Current Chair*	Board Liaison**
Advocacy	advocacy@	Jada Wright-Nichols (VP)	Meredith Sinclair

Bylaws	(no direct email)	Ginger Gorrell	Amie Hood (T)
Communications	socialmediamanager@	Meredith Sinclair	Meredith Sinclair
Education	education@	Sharon Knorr	Rebecca Ruhlen (P)
Elections	elections@	Lauren Logan	Tamika Harris (S)
Ethics	ethics@	Tricia Kuehn	Ginger Gorrell
Finance	finance@	Amie Hood (T)	Amie Hood (T)
Funding & Development	funding@	Aimee Teslaw	Aimee Teslaw
Grievances	grievance@	Nikkole Cooper	Tamika Harris (S)
Inclusivity	(no direct email)	Norma Ritter	Jada Wright-Nichols (VP)
Information Technology	website@	VACANT	Ginger Gorrell
Volunteer Services	volunteersupport@	Krista Clayton	Tamika Harris (S)

*Board policy is to have most committees chaired by volunteers not currently serving on the board. When another suitable volunteer cannot be found, however, a board member may serve as interim chair. Our bylaws require that the Treasurer serve as the chair of the finance committee.

**Board liaisons are informal positions designated by the board and intended to facilitate communications between committees and the board.

Contact the Board of Directors via email: bod@breastfeedingusa.org.

Breastfeeding USA Board of Directors:

Rebecca Ruhlen, President

Jada Wright Nichols, Vice-President

Tamika Harris, Secretary

Amie Hood, Treasurer

Aimee Teslaw

Ginger Gorrell

Meredith Sinclair

