



Inside Breastfeeding USA

October 2019

I. Greetings from the Board of Directors

From the Board

From Director Aimee Teslaw

Volunteering can stretch your skills

You might know me as a Director, or as Chair of Funding and Development. I also have a seat on the Finance committee and am now running the internal financial audit for Breastfeeding USA. If you told me 20 years ago that my life would eventually lead to this, I would have thought you were crazy--I was finishing a Master's degree in English with plans to find a job in publishing. None of my experience has led me directly here, save for having breastfed my babies, like you have your own. The steps along the way to these positions were simply a series of saying YES to an opportunity. Yes, I want to use my experience and gain knowledge to help mothers and babies by becoming a BC. Yes, I want to help Breastfeeding USA as a national volunteer. Sure, I'll take over Funding and Development, and yes, I'll sit on a newly formed Finance Committee in that role.

With every yes I've stretched my skill set. A year ago I thought it was a big stretch to run for the board of directors, and now I find it a HUGE stretch to sit on the Finance Committee. I am learning new things all the time, and I love that Breastfeeding USA has provided me with opportunities to grow. I've also found myself working on these new skills in a supportive environment, for, with, and alongside women who will teach me how to do new things, gently correct me if needed, and mutually acknowledge that we are all mothers first, and that we may be simultaneously doing work for the organization while juggling the responsibilities of motherhood and other jobs. While I am no longer nursing a toddler while on a helping call, I am

sometimes driving my kids home from school while I take one (ever notice how all the moms call during afternoon nap time?), or taking a board call from my kids' gymnastics gym, or crafting a membership campaign in seven different 20-minute stretches of time.

I'd encourage you to open your mind to the possibility that you ARE a good fit for one of the many open volunteer positions at Breastfeeding USA, even if your path hasn't led you directly to it. Because so many people said yes to an opportunity, for the first time in years we had twice as many candidates for the board as we had open seats in an election. Every single candidate was well qualified, even if her experience did not yet include board work. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome and thank our two newest board members, Beth Lichy (who was elected along with existing board members Amie Hood and Jada Nichols), and Claire Barnett, who was voted in by the board to occupy a vacant seat. Because they said yes to the opportunity of being on the board, we now have a full board of 9 members for the first time in many years.

I look forward to getting to know Beth and Claire as we work together, and I also look forward to seeing vacancies fill up with volunteers who want to learn and grow with the organization.

Items of Interest & Upcoming Events

If you know of upcoming regional or local events that might be of interest to our BCs, please submit to communications@breastfeedingusa.org for inclusion in the next newsletter.

Editor's Note

We are looking for a volunteer to take over (or co-produce) Inside Breastfeeding USA. This is a great way to learn more about what all of our committees are doing throughout the month and can easily be done around your schedule. If you have interest in taking this on (or helping out), please email meredith.sinclair@breastfeedingusa.org.

II. From Committees

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

Community Engagement

Interim Chair: Meredith Sinclair (communications@breastfeedingusa.org)

Follow Us on Social Media

If your chapter has a presence on Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter, we hope that you'll help broaden our reach by sharing posts made by our national organization accounts ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)). And we'll keep an eye out for your chapter's post and share those too!

Want to help our social media efforts? Let us know (communications@breastfeedingusa.org).

Share Your Story!

If you would like to submit a breastfeeding story to be featured on our website, in #milkmemos, and/or on Breastfeeding USA's social media platforms, please contact Meredith Sinclair (meredith.sinclair@breastfeedingusa.org). We are also always interested in hearing your stories about your work as a BC or Breastfeeding USA volunteer.

Share Your Photos!!

Have a great breastfeeding photo that you are willing to share? Email photos@breastfeedingusa.org. **We are especially looking for fall/winter holiday themed photos including breastfeeding in costume!**

Please consider sharing these calls for photos in your chapters!

Finance

Chair: Amie Hood (Finance@BreastfeedingUSA.org)

September was a productive month in Finance. The Finance Committee, with approval from the Board, updated our Financial Policies and Procedures, with some significant changes intended to safeguard the organization's finances and streamline processes to ease volunteer burdens. The internal audit is underway, led by Aimee Teslaw, and should be completed in time to file our 990 for the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

As always, financial reports are available upon request at finance@breastfeedingusa.org.

III. Volunteer News & Tips

CAAR Tracking

The new CAAR tracking form is up and running! [Please log your volunteer activities here.](#)

New BCs

We'd like to welcome the following new BCs who completed the course in September:

Katie Casey-WI

Beth Stemig-MN

Audrey Miles-Cherney-CO

We are so glad you are here and look forward to working with you!!

Volunteer Spotlight

If you would like to nominate a Breastfeeding USA volunteer for the volunteer spotlight, please let Meredith Sinclair (meredith.sinclair@breastfeedingusa.org) know!

Volunteer Tip: Why You Matter in the Application Process for New BCs!

Thanks to Beth Lichy for the following on your role in the screening of new BCs.

I have been interviewing new applicants for several years now. It is a rewarding job and you get to meet lots of interesting people! The members of the Applications Team are hard-working and thoughtful, and it is not always easy to decide whether a new applicant will be a good fit to represent Breastfeeding USA.

In addition to the phone interview, we carefully look over all parts of the application, including personal recommendations and notes from the local Breastfeeding Counselor (BC). These notes give us further insight into the applicant's character and background.

Unfortunately, we do not always hear back from the local BC, and I wanted to suggest why a response is so important to us. We understand that the local BC may not really be local and it may seem random when she receives an email from someone she does not know who may live quite some distance away. It may be difficult to know what the BC is expected to discuss with her and what information she is supposed to glean from the applicant.

Some applicants may come from within an established group and already know what happens at a meeting or on a local FB group. Other applicants really don't know much about Breastfeeding USA when they apply. They have probably heard about us via our website or national FB page, or perhaps from another FB group they follow. Having contact with a BC who is currently active in her community means a lot! Although we may be geographically isolated from other BCs, we are all part of a nationwide organization and we have much in common.

Some friendly conversation can help a new applicant feel welcome and needed. All BCs represent Breastfeeding USA, and we can have a big influence by introducing ourselves warmly and being accepting. Tell the applicant a little about yourself and what you are currently doing to support our mission. Ask her about herself and what she would like to do as a BC. She may have questions about what is happening locally and what her options will be once accredited. If she really is local, invite her to a meeting or to share a cup of coffee if you can. If she is a distance away, offer to speak on the phone and be a listening ear if she wants to talk.

It may take a little extra work to respond to both the applicant and the Applications Team. You may need to look up some information in response to an applicant's question or to devote some precious time sharing your thoughts. The Applications Team would like to get your general impression of the applicant. Was she polite, friendly, was she able to communicate well? Did she seem interested in what you are doing? Respond to your follow-up in a timely manner? Say anything that sounded "off" to you? Each piece of information we gather about the applicant helps us form a more complete picture.

Finally, what do we as BCs get out of this interaction? Maybe a new co-BC! We get to support Breastfeeding USA as role models of openness and a desire to draw others in. We invest in Breastfeeding USA's future by expanding our pool of volunteers.

Remember that a small act of friendliness can have a big ripple effect when the next mom is deciding whether to choose Breastfeeding USA. All of us on the Application Team will greatly appreciate your efforts.

****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](#).

Community Engagement:

The newly formed Community Engagement Committee is looking for folks with a passion or skill set for any of the following areas:

- Visioning outreach and publicity campaigns
- Designing outreach materials for chapter use
- Creating memes, infographics, and other visuals for social media and our website
- Curating external content that may be of interest to our social media followers
- 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

We are also looking for:

- Volunteers with Spanish language skills to work on translation of existing materials and/or creation of new Spanish content
- Volunteers with writing and/or editing experience to join the #milkmemos team to take it to a monthly publication.

If you have questions or are interested in any of the above tasks, please contact communications@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

NEW, SHORT-TERM OPPORTUNITY. I am looking for a helper for this year's #GivingTuesday campaign. This has been a HUGE fundraiser for Breastfeeding USA in the last couple of years and we'd like to keep the momentum going. The job would start now then wrap up after #GivingTuesday 2020, which is December 1. You'd study past year's campaigns, look at the free materials from the folks at givingtuesday.org, and collaborate with the F&D chair to share your enthusiasm for Breastfeeding USA through this giving campaign. It's a great way to dip your toes into fundraising waters and to help the org. Any questions? Email aimee.teslaw@breastfeedingusa.org.

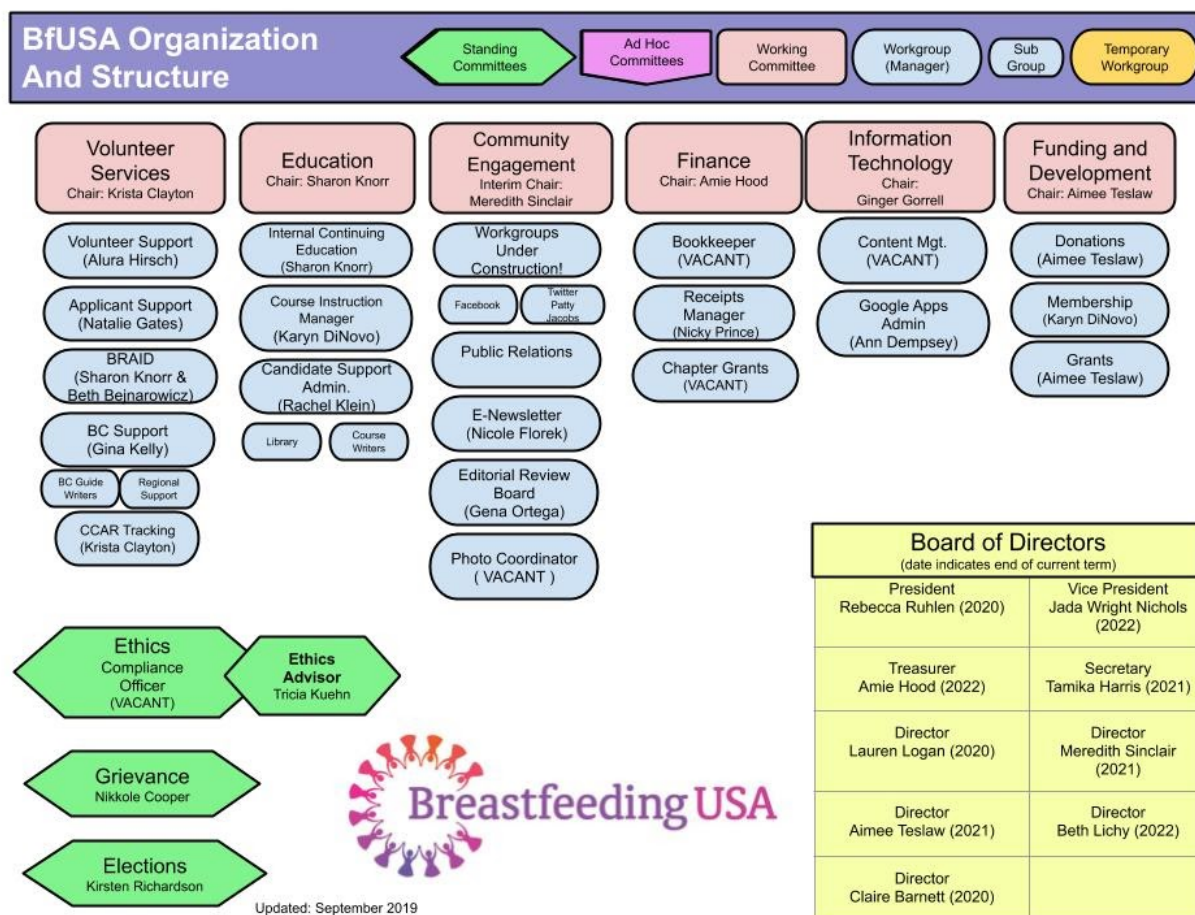
We are also looking for a **Grant Writer**. A key goal of Breastfeeding USA's strategic plan is to strengthen the organization's financial position over the next few years, and this includes the development and implementation of a grant writing strategy. If you have skills and experience in this arena, 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**
Community Engagement	communications@	Meredith Sinclair	Meredith Sinclair
Education	education@	Sharon Knorr	Rebecca Ruhlen (P)
Elections	elections@	Kirsten Richardson	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)
Information Technology	website@	Ginger Gorrell	Lauren Logan

Volunteer Services	volunteersupport@	Krista Clayton	Tamika Harris (S)
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*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

Meredith Sinclair

Lauren Logan

Beth Lichy

Claire Barnett