

In 2023, Black Women are Still Dying from Childbirth

Sonya Young Aadam
CEO, [California Black Women's Health Project](#)

Despite the increasing, albeit minimal, advances in maternal health support and services, Black maternal mortality continues to rise; with the COVID-19 pandemic being a major factor in the increase.

The CDC'S recently released report highlights the need for action toward what we have been championing for decades: equitable access to healthcare and safe birthing outcomes for Black women and birthing people.

According to the [CDC report](#), "in 2021, the maternal mortality rate for Black women was 69.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, 2.6 times the rate for White women."

Although alarming and anger-inducing, the new statistics do not come as a surprise. Our systems continue to operate in anti-Blackness and racial bias. The movement for Black maternal and reproductive health is still largely underfunded and under-supported yet heavily scrutinized and policed. State and local governments and health agencies have yet to fully invest in Black women's leadership and Black community-defined evidence practices (CDEPs).

As our CEO, Sonya Young Aadam, shared with the LA Times, "[while progress is being made, there is a need for more "unapologetic investments" in community efforts focused on Black people,](#)" (Evans, 2023).

California Black Women's Health Project (CABWHP) will continue to be unapologetic in our investment in system transformation, power building and community self-efficacy that allows Black women and birthing families to have the best outcomes possible. Our statewide goal is for Black women to be alive, healthy, and happy, with an empowered village that helps welcome our babies into the world.



California Black Women's Health Project 2022 Inland Empire Birthworker Toolkit Training

As part of our long legacy, CABWHP has been on the frontline partnering for change in maternal and reproductive health through advocacy, outreach, policy, and education. Our work focuses heavily on capacity building, community leadership, and collaboration with several impactful collectives and initiatives like [LA County's African American Infant & Maternal Mortality Initiative](#), the [Sankofa Birthworkers Collective of the Inland Empire](#), [Frontline Doulas](#), and the [University of California Davis Health, Office for Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) (DEI/OHEDI).

CABWHP supports Black birthworkers, families, and organizations with training, education, technical, and fiscal support. We've helped to strengthen the Black birth workforce by aiding the development and sustainability of doula collectives throughout the state. We support the readiness of Black birthworkers through education including business development, Medi-Cal benefit readiness, and full spectrum support that aids Black women in any reproductive choice they make, including to continue with or end a pregnancy. We've also launched an ambassador program helping to scale the

work of birthworkers and advocates throughout the state with equitable compensation.

The CDC's new report highlights devastating news to our community, but our commitment is unwavering. It's going to take all of us. We need your support. Join us in the fight against Black maternal and infant mortality. Learn more about our work and how you can help by visiting www.cabwhp.org or donating at www.cabwhp.org/donate.