



THINKING OF BECOMING AN IBCLC?

Simplify the Process by Participating in the
Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition's IBCLC Mentor Program

WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

The goal of this program is to enhance the lactation work force by increasing the number of IBCLCs who are women of color or who serve a rural area (outside of Lincoln and Omaha). We aim to provide easy-to-understand information and mentoring to help you navigate the certification process.

WHAT DOES THE PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

- 1 COMPLETE 8 HEALTH EDUCATION ACCREDITED COURSES

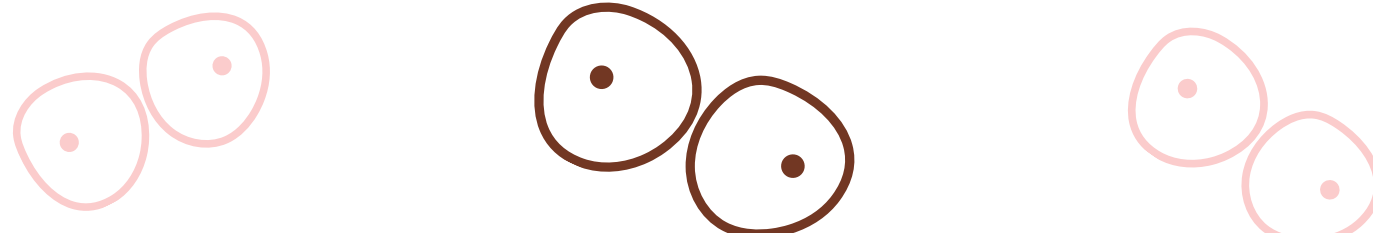
- 2 COMPLETE 6 SUPPLEMENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION COURSES

- 3 COMPLETE 95 HOURS OF LACTATION EDUCATION

- 4 COMPLETE 1 of 3 PATHWAYS FOR CLINICAL HOURS IN LACTATION

- 5 PASS THE IBCLC EXAM

For additional information, please schedule a Zoom chat with an IBCLC mentor.
For a zoom invitation, contact us at info@nebreastfeeding.org





1

Complete 8 Accredited Health Education Courses

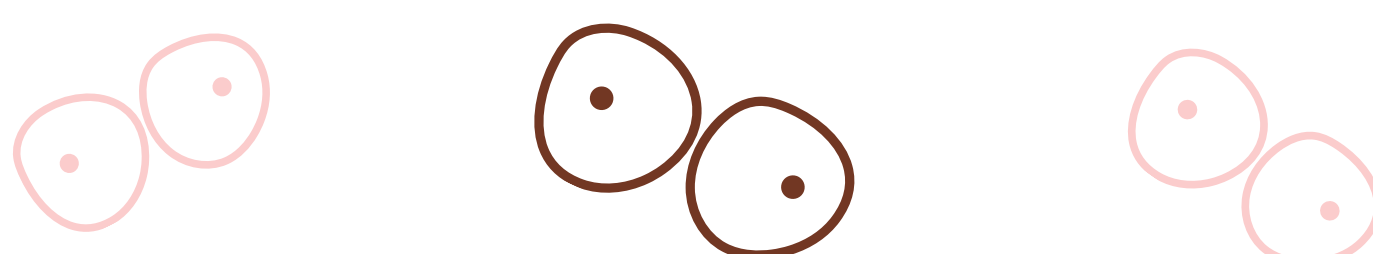
These Courses may be completed at any time prior to taking the IBCLC exam.

- You do NOT need to complete these 8 courses if you are any of the following Recognized Health Professionals (licensed healthcare provider):
 - Dentist
 - Dietician
 - Midwife
 - Nurse
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Pharmacist
 - Physical Therapist or Physiotherapist
 - Physician or Medical Doctor
 - Speech Pathologist or Therapist
- Each course must be a minimum of one academic credit session (e.g. semester, trimester, quarter, etc.) in length and provided by an accredited institution of higher learning. Transcripts must be provided if your application is audited. Online courses are accepted.

The 8 Accredited Health Education courses are:

1. Biology
2. Human Anatomy
3. Human Physiology
4. Infant and Child Growth and Development
5. Introduction to Clinical Research
6. Nutrition
7. Psychology or Counseling Skills or Communication Skills
8. Sociology or Cultural Sensitivity or Cultural Anthropology

Note: A Human Biology course will meet the requirements of Biology, Human Anatomy and Human Physiology.





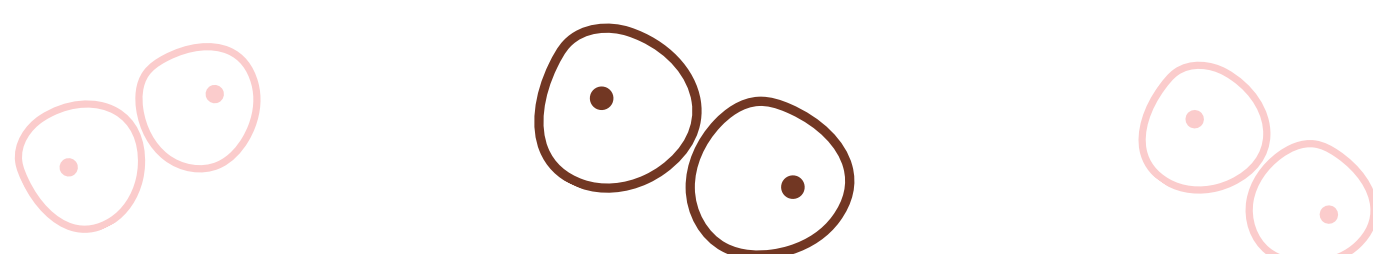
2

Complete 6 Supplemental Health Education courses

Courses may be completed at any time prior to taking the IBCLC exam.

- You may have already taken these courses if you are one of the following Recognized Health Professionals (licensed healthcare providers):
 - Dentist
 - Dietician
 - Midwife
 - Nurse
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Pharmacist
 - Physical Therapist or Physiotherapist
 - Physician or Medical Doctor
 - Speech Pathologist or Therapist
- Courses may be completed at an institution of higher learning or may be a continuing education course. These courses may be offered online or via a community college. A transcript or contact hours certificate must be provided if you are audited.

The 6 Supplemental Health Education courses are:

1. Basic Life Support
 2. Medical Documentation
 3. Medical Terminology
 4. Occupational Safety and Security for Health Professionals
 5. Professional Ethics for Health Professionals
 6. Universal Safety Precautions and Infection Control
- 

3

Complete 95 Hours of Lactation Education

Lactation hours must be completed within five years of applying to take the IBCLC exam.

- Lactation specific classes will enhance your knowledge of providing breastfeeding support to a family and help prepare you for the IBCLC exam. The IBCLC exam covers 14 areas of knowledge. Your lactation education should be broad enough to prepare you to answer questions across the field of lactation.
- The hours do not have to be approved contact hours or CERPS (contact hours approved by IBCLC that are necessary to re-certify), however, **they must be breastfeeding related**, and a certificate of attendance must be obtained. This is vital if your application to sit for the IBCLC exam is audited by IBCLC, the certifying organization.
- Hours may be in-person presentations, online education, distance learning and/or independent study modules.
- As of 2025, two of the 95 hours must be focused on the WHO code, and five of the 95 hours must be a communication course. These five hours cannot count as an accredited Health Education Course. The communication course does NOT have to be lactation specific.

There are numerous options for obtaining lactation education, including:

- **A basic lactation course**, usually 40-50 hours in length designed to provide information on all aspects of lactation. Some of the basic courses may offer a certification upon completion of an exam. For example: Lactation Education Resources offers a Certified Breastfeeding Specialist (CBS) credential upon successfully passing the exam at the conclusion of their course.
- **Individual lactation classes or presentations** focused on a special lactation topic. These are commonly offered via conferences or online presentations.
- **A lactation review course** designed to prepare a candidate to take the IBCLC exam.

Where can you complete these hours?

- Breastfeeding conferences offered by local hospitals, state or local health departments, breastfeeding organizations, and community colleges.
- Organizations that specifically provide lactation education, including:
GOLD (<https://www.goldlactation.com/>), ILCA (<https://ilca.org/>),
USLCA (<https://uslca.org/>), LER (<https://www.lactationtraining.com/>),
LEC (<https://lactationeducation.com/>),
Health E-Learning (<https://www.health-e-learning.com/>),
Healthy Children Project (<https://centerforbreastfeeding.org/>)

4

Complete 1 of 3 Pathways for Clinical Hours in Lactation

Your clinical hours must be completed within five years of applying to sit for the IBCLC exam.

Pathway One

- You must practice as a **Recognized Health Professional** (licensed healthcare provider) OR a paid or volunteer breastfeeding counselor in a health care facility OR provide breastfeeding support via a **Recognized Breastfeeding Support Counselor Organization**.
- You must complete a minimum of 1,000 hours of lactation specific clinical practice in an appropriate supervised setting, which may include a hospital, birth center, community clinic, lactation care clinic, physician office, or health department.
 - **Recognized Health Care Professionals** include dentists, dietitians, midwives, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physical therapists or physiotherapists, physicians or medical doctors, and speech pathologists or therapists
 - **Recognized Breastfeeding Support Counselor Organizations** must be approved by IBCLC and must provide a structured training program for their counselors which includes comprehensive education in breastfeeding and lactation management, have a code of ethics or professional conduct, provide structured supervision for their counselors, with an appropriate level of training, and provide a continuing education program for their counselors.
- The 1,000 clinical hours **do not need to be directly supervised**.

Pathway Two

- You must complete an accredited Lactation Academic Program that includes a minimum of 300 hours of directly supervised lactation specific clinical practice.
- Some examples of accredited programs are: Union Institute & University (B.A /M.S) or UC San Diego Extension (Certificate)

Pathway Three

- You must complete a mentorship with an IBCLC that includes a minimum of 500 directly supervised lactation specific clinical practice **under the direct supervision of an IBCLC(s)**.
- You must have your mentorship plan verified prior to earning your clinical hours. There is an application fee to approve the mentorship plan.
- Observation or shadowing of lactation practitioners **does not count** as lactation specific clinical experience hours

5

Pass the IBCLC Exam.

- The certifying organization for IBCLCs is the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners. IBLCE awards an IBCLC certification after a candidate completes their health education courses, lactation education and clinical hours, applies to take the IBCLC exam, and successfully completes the exam.
- View the complete IBCLC candidate guide here:
 - <https://ibclc-commission.org/ibclc-information/candidate-information-guide/>
- IBLCE offers an international exam twice a year, in spring and fall. The deadline to apply for an exam is five to six months before the exam date. The exam consists of 175 multiple choice questions. *Please check the IBCLC web site (above) for current application deadlines and exam dates.*
- All health education and lactation hours and clinical hours must be completed before applying to take the exam. You do not have to submit proof of completion with your application unless you are audited.
- Practice exams are available to purchase from several organizations, including Healthy E-Learning (<https://www.health-e-learning.com/courses/lactation-exam>), and Lactation Education Resources (<https://www.lerqbank.com/>). The exams are released a month or two before the exam dates.
- You will be assigned a date to take the exam, and the exam is administered in a national testing center. Special testing locations may be available upon request for certain circumstances.
- **Test results** are announced 10-12 weeks after you take the exam.

For additional information, please schedule a Zoom chat with an IBCLC mentor.
For a zoom invitation, contact us at info@nebreastfeeding.org



What is the Approximate Cost to Become an IBCLC?

- **A ballpark figure is approximately \$6,000** (estimated 2025). There are several variables impacting the cost. If you choose to complete clinical pathway 2 and obtain a bachelor's degree in human lactation, the cost of the degree would be substantially higher than \$6,000, but you will also have a bachelor's degree upon graduation. **Please note that the fees listed below are subject to change.**
- There are some **scholarships** available for the exam fee for women of color through the following organizations: **USLCA** (<https://uslca.org/scholarship/>), **Willow LC Equity Scholarship** (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdiUou7YgFmR6dQVXaEbY2F6Q8s9JVCwk6_mDyiXHXRHb7AuQ/viewform), and **LER** (<https://www.lactationtraining.com/risingtide>).

1) Eight Accredited Health Education Courses

- Previously completed college level courses that fit the description of the required courses may be submitted to meet this requirement if you are able to access a transcript for the course.
- These courses are available through an accredited institution of higher learning, such as SCC (Lincoln) or MCC (Omaha). Lactation Education Resources offers them through Walden University for \$250/course.

2) Six Supplemental Health Education Courses

- These courses are available through an accredited institution of higher learning or online. Lactation Education Resources offers a package of the six courses for \$100.

3) 95 Hours of Lactation Education

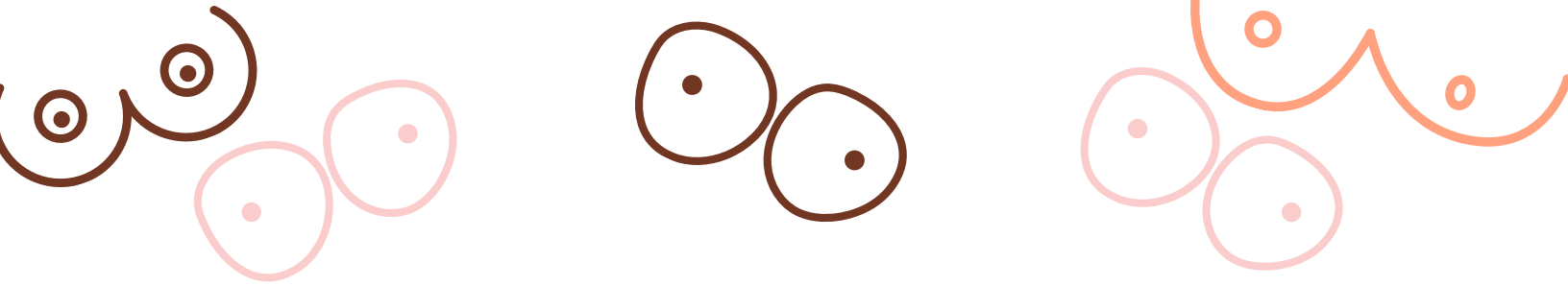
- Some of these hours may be obtained at no cost, others may range in price from \$10 – \$25 an hour. Lactation Education Resources offers all 95 hours for \$1,025.

4) Clinical Hours

- Pathway 2 (completion of an accredited Lactation Academic Program) is the most expensive; these programs are often affiliated with private colleges and may cost in excess of \$60,000.
- Pathways 1 and 2 vary based upon whether the hours are completed as a volunteer, or as a paid employee for an organization.
- Lactation Education Resources offers two options for clinical hours - one for Pathway 1 and one for Pathway 3.

5) Exam Fee

- Practice Exam: estimate \$150.
- Exam Fee: estimate \$700.



Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition IBCLC Mentor Program

Health Education Tracker

Coursework	Date Completed	Transcript
Biology		<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Anatomy		<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Physiology		<input type="checkbox"/>
Infant & Child Growth and Development		<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduction to Clinical Research		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition		<input type="checkbox"/>
Psychology or Counseling skills or Communication skills		<input type="checkbox"/>
Sociology or Cultural Sensitivity or Cultural Anthropology		<input type="checkbox"/>
Basic Life Support		<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical Documentation		<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical Terminology		<input type="checkbox"/>
Occupational Safety and Security for Health Professional		<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Ethics for Health Professionals		<input type="checkbox"/>
Universal Safety Precautions and Infection Control		<input type="checkbox"/>

[illegible]



Clinical Hours Planner & Tracker

- ☐ Pathway 1 : 1000 hours of clinical lactation practice
- ☐ Pathway 2 : 300 hours of directly supervised clinical lactation practice
- ☐ Pathway 3 : 500 hours of directly supervised clinical lactation practice

Projected Start Date	Location / Clinic Site	Projected Hours

(Use this document to make a plan for obtaining clinical hours)

Month / Year position began / ended	Location	Hours Received	Percentage of time dedicated to lactation	Total Hours

(Use this template to create a digital or paper spread sheet to document all of your clinical hours)

Exam

Target Exam Date: _____

Application Deadline: _____