

## **IBCLC Exam Fee and Education Scholarship Program**

The mission of the Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates (COBA) is to promote, protect and support breastfeeding in Oklahoma. The IBCLC Exam Fee and Education Scholarship program aims to increase the number of International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) in Oklahoma with a focus on individuals of color, with demonstrated financial need and/or work in rural areas or with disadvantaged populations.

COBA offers two types of scholarships: Exam Fee and Education. Exam Fee covers the full amount of the fee required to take the IBCLC exam (initial and recertification). The full exam fee will be reimbursed to scholarship awardees when the Scholarship Committee receives confirmation of completed exam registration. Education provides funding for required courses and trainings in preparation for the exam. Education fees will be issued when enrollment is verified.

### **Background**

For those who aspire to be an IBCLC, the cost of taking the exam may present financial challenges. COBA Exam Fee scholarships will fund \$660 per calendar year for first time candidates and \$470 for those who are recertifying. COBA Education scholarships will fund \$840 per calendar year for first time candidates and \$230 for those who are recertifying. Qualified candidates are eligible for funding through both types of scholarships.

While we are committed to supporting all candidates, we want to ensure that our support also reaches the population with the greatest inequities. Priority will be given to first time candidates of minority groups and those planning to work in underserved areas of Oklahoma. Preference will also be given to candidates meeting more than one criterion. All scholarships are designed to support continuing education in the lactation field to improve access to the profession.

### **Expectations & Requirements**

- A scholarship candidate must complete the online application and demonstrate active involvement in the Oklahoma breastfeeding community.

- Candidates must include a short bio and photo along with a letter of recommendation. Applications will be considered incomplete without this letter.
- Candidates must explain how they personally plan to promote, protect and support breastfeeding in Oklahoma as an IBCLC. Not to exceed 300 words, this one-page essay should include how the scholarship will help the candidate achieve professional goals.
- Scholarship recipients will be expected to attend a COBA meeting (virtually) for recognition after passing the exam and serve on a COBA committee for one calendar year.

### **Timeline**

- Applications with supporting required documents must be submitted by midnight on January 30 for spring exam and May 31 for fall exam.
- Scholarship awards will be announced by February 28 for the spring exam and June 30 for the fall exam.
- Should a scholarship recipient need to request a partial refund for any reason prior to taking the exam, or not complete/attend the education program for which they are enrolled, COBA will be fully and promptly reimbursed accordingly.
- Should you have questions, please contact COBA: [info@okbreastfeeding.org](mailto:info@okbreastfeeding.org).

### **Evaluation**

The exam scholarships are intended to assist lactation professionals who desire to further their accreditation and increase the representation of IBCLCs within marginalized communities. To help COBA best identify where funds are most needed, recipients will be required to complete a written report within one year of passing the exam outlining how becoming IBCLC certified has impacted the communities in which they serve.