



## Ohio Lactation Consultant Association

### *Mission Statement*

*To be the voice of Ohio lactation consultants in their efforts to transform society into a breastfeeding culture. To empower, support, and educate our membership; enabling them to be articulate agents for change.*

### **Diversity Scholarship Information, Rules and Requirements**

#### **Scholarship Deadline: September 30th**

In Ohio, breastfeeding rates are greatly affected by racial and socioeconomic health disparities. Well established breastfeeding helps to reduce infant mortality. Lactation consultants play a key role in successful breastfeeding. However, there is disparity in access to culturally matched lactation consultants across diverse communities. Equitable representation among health care professionals is needed to reduce disparities. There are times when financial barriers can interfere with those aspiring to become lactation consultants. Diverse and active representation in state associations is imperative in helping to overcome healthcare racial injustice and disparities among diverse groups in the field of lactation. Yet financial and cultural misperceptions may inadvertently discourage participation.

As OLCA strives to improve access to the lactation consultant profession and welcome diverse voices within the association through advocacy work across the state, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee offers diversity scholarships to coincide with National Breastfeeding Month and Black Breastfeeding Week in August of each year.

OLCA provides scholarships for professional development in the area of lactation.

The number of Diversity scholarships offered each year depends on the annual budget. Five scholarships up to \$700 may be offered.

Award may be used for conference registration, professional development, or any related expenses.

Priority will be given to those seeking certification through IBCLE.

Questions regarding application details or submission may be directed to applicant's regional representative or OLCA Vice President: [vicepresident@ohio-olca.org](mailto:vicepresident@ohio-olca.org).

#### **Reimbursement**

Scholarships are a reimbursement award. The funds are reimbursed to recipient once the course has been attended and the receipt and certificate of completion is submitted to the treasurer of OLCA. If scholarship funds are being used for the IBCLE exam, reimbursement will be considered upon proof of payment. Scholarship for OLCA annual conference (aka. Breastfest) registration may be granted in the form of a discount code to be used during registration, and recipient will be notified sufficiently in advance of the conference so that registration can happen in a timely manner. The receipt of payment must be within one year of award or award will be forfeited. Scholarship funds may only be used for the exam fees once per person (lifetime). Hardship situations will be taken into consideration and funding may be provided in advance when necessary. Applicant should submit a letter of hardship to the Vice President of OLCA. Checks must be cashed within 90 days of receipt; unused funds will be returned to OLCA. Funds must be used within one year of award.

## **Eligibility**

Applicants must identify as a member of a historically underrepresented racial group of lactation care providers (Black/African American, Latinx, Asian, Native American/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander)

Membership is not required for this scholarship application. Note that one year of membership fees can be waived for any prospective member who identifies as a member of a historically underrepresented racial group of lactation care providers (Black/African American, Latinx, Asian, Native American/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander). The OLCA membership year is January 1-December 31

## **Application:**

- 2 Letters of references should be emailed to [vicepresident@ohio-olca.org](mailto:vicepresident@ohio-olca.org) with the subject line Diversity Scholarship Reference Letter

## **Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.**

- Keep a copy of the application for your records.
- Scholarship applications will be acknowledged by email.
- Both the applicant and the person giving the reference will be notified of receipt of reference letters by email.

Applicants must currently work or reside in Ohio

Priority will be given to first time applicants/recipients and with completion of the following questions/comments:

1. What type of involvement have you had within the lactation community to advance the cause of normalizing breastfeeding in Ohio?
2. What skills do you have that positively impact the families you serve?
3. What are your plans for this scholarship, and how do you anticipate that this scholarship will enhance or help you continue the work in the community that you serve?
4. Please describe any financial hardship, need for this scholarship, how much are you seeking, and any other options for funding.
5. Do you anticipate any barriers in accomplishing your goals or mission? If so, please describe.
6. Would you be willing to later share with OLCA how this scholarship has benefited you or the community that you serve?

## **OLCA Scholarship Selection**

- A committee will determine who will be awarded a scholarship. Committee may be comprised of the DEI committee, VP, a LLL leader, 1- 2 OLCA members (non-board), peer helper, or a community member not affiliated with OLCA with basic breastfeeding knowledge. The committee may also be the OLCA Board.

- o Committee members who apply for a scholarship will recuse themselves from the committee.  
Scholarship Committee members may not write a letter of reference for applicants.
- Scholarship recipients will receive an email or letter with reimbursement instructions.
- Awardees will be announced at the November OLCA Member Meeting.
- A brief summary of the winners and their scholarship application may be highlighted at the annual conference, printed in the newsletter, and/or posted on the OLCA website.
- All Scholarship Committee decisions are final.

### **IMPORTANT**

Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Acknowledgment of receipt of application does not indicate completeness of application. It is the applicant's responsibility to be sure the application is complete.

### **Additional OLCA Grant and Scholarship Opportunities**

OLCA offers additional grants and scholarships each year to support breastfeeding projects and those pursuing work in the field of lactation. Applications typically open up late in the fall, and scholarships are awarded at our annual conference. Please see our website to apply for one of those scholarships if you do not feel like you are eligible for this opportunity, or are not selected for this scholarship