EVER THRIVE ILLINOIS

CHAMPIONS FOR HEALTH EQUITY

RISING IN HOPE



ROOTED IN RESISTANCE

ANNUAL REPORT

2026

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FRIENDS,

EverThrive IL has spent decades advancing courageous change in the state of Illinois. From the beginning, we have pioneered a collective reimagining of the future of reproductive justice across communities and generations. As we celebrate the close of another impactful year, we invite you to join us in nurturing a future rooted in hope, justice, and opportunity: a future we are building together.

Every Illinoisan deserves the opportunity to thrive.

We envision a future in which every Illinoisan has the health care and support necessary to determine if, when, and how to become a parent safely and in a sustainable community. Before championing a bill, developing a program, or deepening a partnership, we ground ourselves in this vision.

We are our future generations' keepers.

As we face new and old challenges to our vision for change, imagining what's possible keeps us rooted and puts us in a position to work towards a future where every individual is valued, every birthing experience is safe, and every family has the resources to flourish. The seeds of hope we sow now are just as important as the environment we create for them to grow in. Through bold action, thoughtful questioning, sustained advocacy, and meaningful partnerships, we create the conditions for that hope to thrive.

Courageous change is a collective effort.

Inside every transformed system are several transformed lives. As advocates, healthcare providers, legislators, community organizations, philanthropic partners, and dedicated supporters, we all contribute to a movement that sees real opportunity awakened every day. Through our collective action and envisioning, a healthcare ecosystem rooted in dignity and justice is not just a dream from 40 years ago; it is a promise we are working together to fulfill.

On behalf of the EverThrive IL team and all of the communities we serve, thank you for being bold and courageous with us. Together we are *Rooted in Resistance, Rising in Hope*.

In solidarity,



Chi Chi Okwu, MPH
Executive Director



Saajida Fair
Board Chairperson

YEAR IN REVIEW

Each year, EverThrive IL brings our bold vision for health equity to life through strategic action, **moving Illinoisan communities closer to the future of just, transformative care we know is possible.** In 2026, these efforts are presented as follows:

Unlocking Informed Decision-making

Our initiatives are havens for resource-sharing and education. Through programs like our community chats, *The Gathering*, and *National Infant Immunization Campaign*, we provide Illinoisans, especially BIPOC birthing individuals, with a wide range of tools to better understand and care for their reproductive health. Similarly, through initiatives like *Healthy Choices, Healthy Futures*, we also ensure that health and social service providers receive the tools they need to support families with care and confidence.

Integrating Systems of Support

By connecting families, healthcare providers, and community organizations, we can more effectively bridge the resource gaps that prevent our communities from thriving. Through the promotion of programs such as *Family Connects Chicago* and *Family Councils*, we foster cross-sector collaboration that strengthens families' ability to access support in their homes and beyond. These partnerships are key to improved maternal and infant health outcomes.



Centering Community Voices

As connectors across multiple sectors of health advocacy, we work to ensure our efforts stay grounded in the needs and experiences of Illinois families. In partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health, we lead the *Care Coordination Working Group for Maternal Health Multi-Sector Strategy* to ensure pregnant and postpartum people, especially those most impacted by inequities, can seamlessly connect to the clinical, emotional, social, and economic supports they need to thrive. As we build our broader strategy, we are closely collaborating with pregnant and parenting people, caregivers, and families across the state.

2026 BY THE NUMBERS

36,577 **community members reached** through face-to-face community events and campaign outreach in FY26



676 **health and social service providers statewide** received information from our staff about the *Healthy Choices, Healthy Futures* toolkit to support women during their reproductive years.

68,363



individuals were informed about the importance and safety of infant immunizations through our *National Infant Immunization Week* campaign's virtual and face-to-face outreach.



231,050

people received information about the importance of vaccinations against viruses like COVID-19 and Influenza through our virtual and face-to-face fall and winter vaccine campaigns.

11,932

people were reached through *The Gathering* in FY26, expanding collective understanding of the root causes of the Black maternal mortality crisis and resources available to families.

37

coalition and expert advisory committee members mobilized in meaningful action towards comprehensive, equitable healthcare for their communities.

GAINS IN POLICY

In 2026, in collaboration with numerous community and legislative partners, EverThrive IL's efforts to protect resources for Illinoisans contributed to crucial gains towards reproductive justice across the state. These include, but are not limited to, the approved passage of the following:

FY27 LEGISLATION

SB3341
Birth Control Services to Minors Act, reaffirming access to contraception for minors.

HB5295
Reproductive Health Records Privacy Act, protecting abortion-related patients' health information from being accessed by out-of-state entities.

HB4606
Supporting the development of essential infrastructure for existing and future *Universal Newborn Support Services* programs statewide.

Medicaid Omnibus Bill
Showing early steps towards a cash transfer program for pregnant and postpartum parents to reduce infant mortality and child welfare system involvement.

FY27 BUDGET

$28.4 M for maternal and child home visiting programs.

$24.7 M for infant mortality reduction, case management, outreach services, and intensive prenatal care initiatives.

$18 M for reproductive health navigation, provider training, consultation, clinic security, and related initiatives.

$14.7 M for safety-net hospitals.

$4.5 M for school-based health centers.

$250,000 to EverThrive IL for operating expenses.

We thank the General Assembly for championing the health and safety of Illinois families. Looking towards FY28, we will continue advocating for the protection of pregnant people and working families by:

- Working with state agencies to create a plan to ensure currently and recently pregnant people maintain Medicaid coverage despite HR1 changes.
- Developing the foundation for universal risk assessment and care coordination for pregnant people statewide.
- Supporting the efforts of community-based birthworkers to increase access and support for themselves and their clients.

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITIES

In our vision for the future of reproductive justice in Illinois, transformative care meets communities where they are and guides them to wherever they want to be.

Our work in the community teaches us that meaningful, equitable healthcare begins with a genuine understanding of the needs and experiences of those at most risk. With this knowledge, we can better envision and co-create a future of conscious, lasting change.

In our future, all Illinoisans can access respectful, expansive, and culturally competent care.



“What gives me hope for the future is the work that EverThrive IL does. Someone has to advocate for communities that are often left without the systems they need or even knowing where to go to be heard. People know what they experience. They cry out for help. They talk to their families, their friends, and their neighbors. But those conversations don’t always lead to change on a larger scale. That’s why organizations like ours matter.

Tashya Kyles, Outreach Worker

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, Black women in Illinois are over twice as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes and three times as likely to die from pregnancy-related medical conditions as white women. **Nearly all of these deaths are the result of systematized discrimination and implicit bias, and nearly all are preventable.**

EverThrive IL's ***Grand Rounds Virtual Training*** provides healthcare providers in hospital settings with training to strengthen their understanding of the impacts of implicit bias and racial disparities, as well as the value of doulas in BIPOC birthing experiences

In our future, all Illinoisans can make informed decisions about their bodies and their families' health.



> "If community events like these did not exist, I wouldn't have as much support, because I don't have a lot of that from family and friends. I would probably be less informed about a lot of postpartum and prenatal stuff that I probably wouldn't have known if I didn't come today.
>
> **Felicia Jones,** Community Member & Mom-to-Be

Felicia is one of 33 expectant parents who attended our ***Annual Community Baby Shower***. Now in its fourth year, this event provides new parents a warm space to learn, connect, and empower themselves and their families. This event marked the end of our ***National Infant Immunization Week***, one of EverThrive IL's many initiatives to raise awareness on the importance of infant vaccinations and informed decision-making for growing families.

Community education is a renewable resource. By sharing resources, informational materials, social connections, and more, we root each other in lives of conscious, courageous choice.

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