

Supporting Breastfeeding at Work



A Guide for Employers



Breastfeeding, It's Good for Business

Providing support for your employees at work is good for health and good for business! Support is available to help your business comply with Colorado and federal laws and improve your bottom line.

Hundreds of companies across America provide lactation support programs as part of their family-friendly benefits. They've learned that lactation accommodations at work produce a **3-to-1 return on investment** due to:

- **Lower health care costs because babies and parents are healthier**
Mutual of Omaha found that their newborn health care costs are three times less when employees participate in a lactation program. They save \$2,146 for each employee!
- **Reduced rate of absenteeism due to baby's illness (among both mothers and fathers)**
Insurance company, CIGNA, found a 77% reduction in lost work time since babies who receive breast milk are healthier. The company saves more than \$60,000 per year in lower absenteeism rates.
- **Lower turnover rates**
A 9-company study found that the average return-to-work rate is 94% when a lactation program is provided.
- **Improved employee productivity and loyalty**
Companies report employees are more productive and loyal when they provide lactation support, such as time and space to express milk while at work.



Financial help may be Available

Your local public health agency or breastfeeding coalition may have money for businesses and worksites to create lactation spaces, including reimbursement for costs from construction to furnishings. Staff can work hand-in-hand with you to conduct an assessment, develop a plan to become a Breastfeeding Friendly business, and recognize your business for leadership in providing a breastfeeding friendly environment.

Making Breastfeeding Work for Employers

Accommodating breastfeeding employees in the workplace can work for YOUR business.

Nine out of ten babies in Colorado are breastfed. The longer breastfeeding occurs, the more health benefits received. Your support makes it easier for a family to continue to breastfeed their child after they return to work. The requirements are simple: a clean private area to express milk and a short break every two or three hours.

Breastfeeding Works in Businesses Across Colorado



“ I feel very lucky to work for a company that allows me to put my family first. It makes me want to be a better employee in return.”

~ Controller, Elevation Beer Company, Poncha Springs

“ One of our early commitments to families and staff was to ensure that our facility was truly a ‘home away from home’ for our young families and youngest learners. Becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly facility was a natural and necessary part of our journey at TLC! We share our commitment to breastfeeding with parents during the tour and initial conversation with each new family. We offer a welcoming, private (breastfeeding) room with a glider, soft features, children’s books, and information about breastfeeding. Responses such as “that’s awesome!” and “wow, this is amazing!” are heard frequently.”

~ Educational Services Manager, TLC Learning Center, Longmont



“ The well-being of our employees and the people we serve is important to us. That’s why we took the steps to ensure nursing moms are supported in Boulder County offices. We’ve made room in our buildings so that moms feel supported in this important part of their child’s development. With the terrific partnership of Boulder County Public Health, the process to become a Breastfeeding Friendly workplace was easy.”

~ Director of Human Resources, Boulder County

“ A designated lactation space, when combined with full support of breastfeeding anytime, anywhere, sends a message to our community about what we value.”

~ Nutrition Programs Manager, Metro Caring, Denver



Accommodating Breastfeeding Employees at Work is the Law

Federal Law

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) was amended in 2010 with the passage of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, requiring employers to accommodate breastfeeding employees who wish to express milk for their babies during the work period. The law stipulates that employers must provide:

- Reasonable time; and
- Private space to express milk (that is not a bathroom).

Colorado Laws

Colorado Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act

In 2008, Colorado lawmakers passed the Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act that requires all employers to make breastfeeding accommodations in the workplace by:

- Providing reasonable, unpaid break time or allowing an employee to use paid break and/or meal time to express breast milk for up to 2 years after the child's birth;
- Making reasonable efforts to provide a breastfeeding employee with a private location in close proximity to their work area (other than a toilet stall) in which to express milk; and
- Not discriminating against employees for expressing milk in the workplace.

Breastfeeding in Public Act

Colorado Revised Statutes § 25-6-302 establishes that a mother may breastfeed in any place she has a right to be. This Act acknowledges that Colorado is involved in the national movement to recognize the medical importance of breastfeeding, within the scope of complete pediatric care, and to encourage removal of societal boundaries placed on breastfeeding in public.

Postponement of Jury Service for a Person Who is Breastfeeding a Child Act

Colorado Revised Statutes § 13-71-119.5 establishes that a person who is breastfeeding a child is eligible for two 12-month postponements of jury service.

5 Simple Steps to Compliance

1. Start the conversation about the needs of breastfeeding employees in your workplace.
2. Complete the self-assessment and contact your local public health agency or breastfeeding coalition to develop a plan based on the assessment.
3. Review, revise, or create a lactation policy or guidance document.
4. Identify space and time options that comply with the law.
5. Continue to promote and improve your lactation support services through employee education, supervisor training, regular policy and program reviews, and soliciting feedback from your breastfeeding employees.

Compliance is possible in nearly every work setting, and there are many resources to help. For more information about these laws, contact:

- Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition: www.COBFC.org
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: www.BreastfeedColorado.com
- Colorado Department of Labor and Employment: <http://www.colorado.gov/cdle/labor>
- U.S. Department of Labor: www.dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers

Basic Needs of Employees

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend that babies be exclusively breastfed for about the first six months of life. Continued breastfeeding, along with appropriate solid foods, should continue for up to two years of age or beyond.

Support

Breastfeeding employees need information, support, and simple accommodations to reach their infant-feeding goals. Providing a little extra break time and space to express their milk is a temporary need. Be sure to inform employees about their milk expression options prior to their maternity leave.

Employers and supervisors set the tone for an environment of support that enables employees to feel comfortable and confident using lactation services, so don't forget to train supervisors on how to identify and respond to requests. Human resources staff is a valuable source of information to help both employees and supervisors find solutions that will work in your situation. Some companies establish lactation policies to ensure consistent support is provided for all employees who need lactation services.

Expressing Milk

To keep breast milk production high, milk must be removed from the breasts every 2-3 hours, either by the baby directly breastfeeding or by a breast pump or hand expression. Once the milk is removed, the body makes more milk. If it is not removed, the amount of milk made declines over time.

While at work, it is important for a breastfeeding employee to express and remove milk regularly. The milk can be safely stored in a small refrigerator in or near the lactation room, in an insulated cooler bag, or in a general employee refrigerator. Since the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) considers human milk to be food, not a biohazard, human milk can be safely stored in the employee refrigerator.

Potential liability from using breast pump equipment provided by the company is easily addressed by asking women to sign a release of responsibility to the company. If the business allows a caregiver to bring the baby to the employee during breaks for feedings, employees can sign a similar release of responsibility (see example at www.babiesatwork.org).



Did You Know?

Lactation needs at work may change from time to time.

- Right after maternity leave, an employee may need to express milk a little more frequently.
- Babies also go through different periods of rapid growth, requiring an extra milk expression session at work for a few days to keep up with the baby's demand. At other times, babies will seem to need less milk.
- Ongoing dialogue with employees will help assure that their needs and the needs of the business are being addressed.

Time to Express Milk

It takes around 20 minutes to express milk (not counting the time to get to and from the lactation space), though some individuals might require a little longer at first. Most breastfeeding employees need to express milk every 2-3 hours.

Most employees are able to use their regular breaks or meal period and will clock in and out as usual. If extra time is needed, they can discuss options with their supervisor, such as taking it as unpaid time, coming in a little earlier or later, or taking a shorter meal period.

Private Space

The law requires a business to provide a private area free from intrusion from coworkers and the public. Privacy can be assured with a lock on a door or signage that protects the employee's privacy, such as covering windows as needed. A quiet, private area will also help them to relax so milk expression is quicker and more efficient.

There are many options for a private space, including:

- The employee's own office if it is private
- The office of a coworker or supervisor
- A conference room
- A closet or storage room
- Any small private area not in use

Many organizations create a designated lactation space if they have more than one employee who would benefit from. The room can be as simple or as elaborate as desired, and a space large enough to accommodate a chair and a flat surface for the pump is all that is needed. Ideally, the room will be located near a sink and will include an electric outlet for plugging in the breast pump and a door that can be secured. **The room cannot be a bathroom.**

Checklist for Employers

When an employee requests lactation accommodations, the following checklist can help you plan.

- Discuss the organization's lactation policy BEFORE to the employee's maternity leave, if possible, to make necessary arrangements while the employee is away.
- Praise your employee! Tell them you will support their decision to breastfeed.
- Assure that the employee's direct supervisor and other relevant managers are aware of their needs.
- Review the employee's typical work/break schedule to arrange for milk expression breaks.
- Arrange for coverage (such as using "floaters") while the employee is away from their work station.
- Identify private space that is not a restroom.
- Seek feedback from the employee and supervisor.

Studies show that the U.S. could save more than \$13 billion in health care costs and save nearly 1,000 lives each year if 90% of women breastfed their babies exclusively for at least 6 months. The U.S. Surgeon General has issued the *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*, urging employers to provide basic lactation accommodations to help employees continue to give breast milk to their babies after returning to work.

Worksite Self-Assessment

Business Name _____

Contact Person _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Policy: *An explicit policy or set of guidelines outlining organizational support for breastfeeding employees*

Progressing	Breastfeeding Friendly	Breastfeeding Advocate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We do not have a breastfeeding policy. <input type="checkbox"/> Our breastfeeding policy is informal and is not written or regularly communicated to staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> We have a written breastfeeding policy but it is not regularly distributed or communicated to all employees. <input type="checkbox"/> We have a written policy and it is distributed or communicated to all employees at least once a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding policy-related information is provided to all new hires. <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding policy-related training is provided to all new supervisors. <input type="checkbox"/> Our insurance plan covers breastfeeding equipment or breastfeeding services OR we educate our employees on breastfeeding-related benefits available through the Affordable Care Act. <input type="checkbox"/> Our insurance plan notifies our employees that we are a breastfeeding-friendly workplace. <input type="checkbox"/> We contract with a lactation consultant to provide services for all breastfeeding employees.

Time: *Workplace flexibility*

Progressing	Breastfeeding Friendly	Breastfeeding Advocate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are significant barriers to employees scheduling breaks and work patterns to provide time to breastfeed, express, or pump breast milk during the workday. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are few or no barriers to employees scheduling breaks and work patterns to provide time to breastfeed, express, or pump breast milk during the workday. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Employees can bring breastfeeding babies to work with them. <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare is available and accessible to employees and accommodates breastfeeding.

Space: *Accessible, clean, private, and safe space other than a bathroom for employees to express or pump breast milk*

Progressing	Breastfeeding Friendly	Breastfeeding Advocate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are no designated breastfeeding spaces available. <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding spaces are only available and identified as the need arises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritized breastfeeding space(s) are identified and can be used by employees as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding space(s) are solely designated as breastfeeding space(s) for employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigerator space is prioritized for breast milk storage in proximity to the lactation space(s). <input type="checkbox"/> A functioning sink is in proximity to the lactation space(s) for employees to clean pumping equipment. <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding-friendly messaging and/or graphics are around the workplace. <input type="checkbox"/> We have electric breast pumps available for breastfeeding employees. <input type="checkbox"/> We have pump kits available for breastfeeding employees. <input type="checkbox"/> We publicize that customers may breastfeed in public spaces.

Resources

Colorado

Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition

A volunteer organization of physicians, nurses, public health officials, dietitians, lactation consultants, counselors, and members of the business community. The website includes resources, videos highlighting challenges and successes for worksite lactation programs and a list of local breastfeeding coalitions. www.cobfc.org

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Downloadable resources and webinars on all aspects of breastfeeding support, including the Colorado Baby-Friendly Hospital Collaborative, and breastfeeding friendly child care, medical office, and workplace information.

www.breastfeedcolorado.com

Colorado Statutes Governing Breastfeeding Women

Includes the full text of the statutes supporting breastfeeding in the workplace and public venues, and in support of the American Academy of Pediatrics breastfeeding recommendations. www.breastfeedinglaws.uslegal.com/state-laws/colorado-breast-feeding-laws/

National

The Business Case for Breastfeeding from the Office on Women's Health

Free resources with bottom-line benefits for employers establishing comprehensive lactation support programs; easy steps for implementing; ideas for space, time, education, and support; reproducible templates that can be tailored to the business; and employee educational materials. Published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Maternal and Child Health Bureau. www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/government-in-action/business-case-for-breastfeeding

United States Breastfeeding Committee

Links to numerous national resources and a listing of state breastfeeding coalitions. www.usbreastfeeding.org

International Lactation Consultant Association

Worksite Lactation Support Directory lists lactation consultants available to assist businesses with an employee lactation support program. www.ilca.org.

United States Surgeon General

Surgeon General's *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding and National Prevention Strategy*. www.surgeongeneral.gov.

Parenting in the Workplace Institute

The Parenting in the Workplace Institute researches and provides resources for the implementation of formal programs in which parents can bring their children to work and care for them while doing their jobs. www.babiesatwork.org.

Notes



This toolkit is sponsored by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment through the Cancer, Cardiovascular, and Pulmonary Disease (CCPD) Grants Program.

This toolkit was created by Boulder County Public Health and adapted for statewide use throughout Colorado.

For more information about creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Organization, email the Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition at info@cobfc.org.



Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition | www.cobfc.org

