



## OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

246 North High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

614/466-3543  
[www.odh.ohio.gov](http://www.odh.ohio.gov)

Ted Strickland/Governor

Alvin D. Jackson, M.D./Director of Health

### RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING LACTATION POLICIES FOR THE WORKPLACE

Workplace breastfeeding programs may help to mitigate health care costs, lost productivity, and absenteeism. In support of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services Directive on providing reasonable time and space for nursing mothers, this additional information is offered by the Ohio Department of Health to assist agencies in developing workplace breastfeeding programs.

#### Benefits of Workplace Lactation Support

There is ample evidence that a supportive work site environment with a private place to express milk and access to a quality breast pump helps women feel more confident in continuing to breastfeed after returning to work.

Workplace breastfeeding programs may help to mitigate health care costs, lost productivity, and absenteeism by:

- Reducing the risk of some short- and long-term health issues for women and children;
- Decreasing employee absences associated with caring for a sick child;
- Promoting an earlier return from maternity leave;
- Reducing the stress related to returning to work;
- Increasing retention of productive female employees;
- Lowering health care costs: Breastfeeding can reduce medical costs for mother and child. For every 1,000 babies not breastfed, there are an extra 2,033 physician visits, 212 days in the hospital and 609 prescriptions.
- Lowering absenteeism: One-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula feeding infants.
- Keeping valuable employees: Employee turnover is costly. Agencies are interested in retaining valuable employees, including those who go on maternity leave. Providing family-centered programs to help employees balance family and work commitments can positively impact retention rates, resulting in potential cost savings to the company. A study of multiple companies with lactation support programs found an average retention rate of 94%.
- Building positive public relations: Agency breastfeeding programs may help agencies build goodwill within the community. In addition, any recognition given to breastfeeding-friendly worksites can be valuable because it gives agencies a competitive advantage when recruiting and retaining employees.

One reference for creating a workforce lactation program is National Business Group on Health, Center for Prevention and Health Services (n.d.). *Investing in Workplace Breastfeeding Programs and Policies: An Employer's Tool Kit*. <http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/benefitsttopics/breastfeeding.cfm>

## **Implementing an Agency Lactation Room Policy**

The State of Ohio Nursing Mother Directive sets the baseline for supporting nursing mothers consistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Experience of agencies that have already established such policies, such as the Ohio Department of Health, may be helpful for other agencies in their planning process to implement the Directive. Agencies may consider the information below in developing agency specific practices for nursing mothers.

### Assess the Demand for the Program

Projects may grow as the needs of employees become more apparent. Agencies may consider adding other components such as education resources, hospital-grade electric pumps, lactation support, and additional lactation rooms or amenities.

Questions to answer include:

- How many women in the child-bearing years work for the agency?
- How many employees are likely to use a support program?
- Which agency office or work unit will be responsible for program oversight?
- How should space be allocated for a lactation room?
- What resources are available to equip the lactation room?
- What program policies need to be developed?
- What kind of record keeping will the program require?
- What are the best ways to promote the program to potential participants, their colleagues and supervisors?

### Promote the Program

Consider convening a task force of agency stakeholders to identify issues pertinent to the agency and recommend program policies that will address the needs of breastfeeding employees. Including managers, supervisors and human resources professionals on the task force can help to gain “buy in” for the program and create a supportive environment in the workplace.

Other ways to promote the new program include:

- Articles in internal print or web-based newsletters
- Staff meetings
- Posters and bulletin board displays; printed materials available in public areas of the agency
- Employee wellness or health fairs

### Implement a Program

Based on demand and interest for a lactation support program, the agency can determine the extent to which lactation rooms will be equipped. The following chart represents various options. If the agency decides to provide a multi-user grade pump for mothers to use, the item and supplies are on State term contract: Multi-user hospital grade pump: (See DAS contract # RS900810 for Breast pumps, Kits, Shields and Accessories effective 10/1/09 – 9/30/12 – Index No: MAC017L).

## Lactation Room Suggestions

Basic	Advanced	State of the Art
Sign-up sheet for scheduling time	Sign-up sheet for scheduling time	Sign-up sheet for scheduling time
Electrical outlet (standard 110v)	Electrical outlet (standard 110v)	Electrical outlet (standard 110v)
Room locks from the inside	Room locks from the inside	Room locks from the inside
Waste basket	Waste basket	Waste basket
Comfortable chair	Comfortable chair, footstool	Recliner
Table or flat surface to hold the breast pump	Table or flat surface to hold the breast pump	Table or flat surface to hold the breast pump
Disinfectant wipes	Disinfectant wipes	Disinfectant wipes
Room is located near a source of hot running water/paper supplies	Room has a sink with hot water/paper supplies	Room has a sink with hot water/paper supplies
Employee brings her own breast pump	Employer pays for rental of a breast pump, or provides a hospital-grade multi-user electric breast pump that is purchased or rented	Employer subsidizes or provides a portable electric breast pump, or provides a hospital-grade multi-user electric breast pump
Employee brings her own attachment kit if hospital-grade pump is used	Employer subsidizes the cost of attachment kits for hospital-grade pump	Breast pumps are also provided for partners of male employees employer provides the attachment kit for employees
Employee stores milk in a public area refrigerator or personal cooler	Employer provides personal coolers for storing milk	Employer provides a small refrigerator within the room for storing milk
Clean room	Clean room	Clean room
	Bulletin board for posting baby photos and notes of support	Bulletin board for posting baby photos and notes of support
	Educational resources are available	Educational resources are available
	Work surface space is provided	Work surface space is provided
	Attractive wall hangings, floral arrangement, etc.	Attractive wall hangings, floral arrangement, relaxing music, etc.
		Telephone is available for employee to check voicemail messages
		Computer terminal with vs pc/ internet access is available