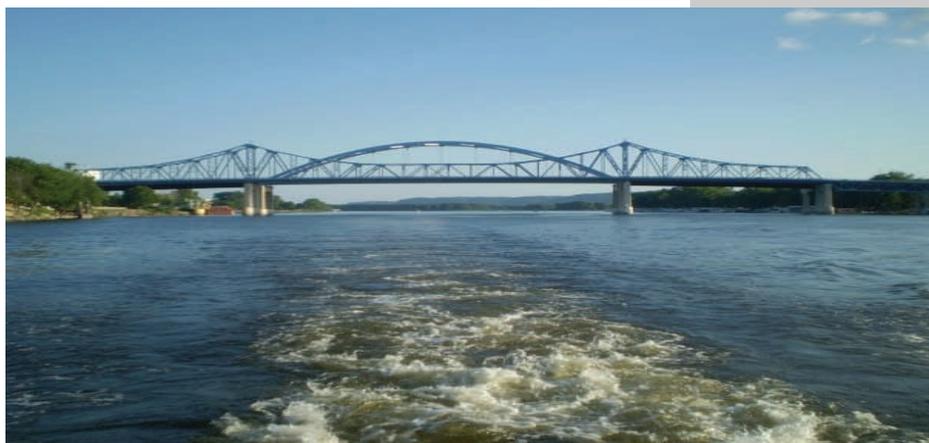


Breastfeeding Business Toolkit

Retaining and Sustaining your Workforce
through a Lactation Support Program



A toolkit which....

- Offers guidance and examples for creating a lactation support program for nursing mothers at the workplace
- Promotes La Crosse County Health Department's goal of helping to provide support and services to local businesses creating more breastfeeding-friendly workplaces
- Assists local businesses to be in compliance with the services as mandated by federal law

February 2012

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LAW

In 2010, Section 4207 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was amended by adding that an employer shall provide:

“a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for 1 year after the child’s birth each time such employee has need to express the milk,” and also the stipulation that this be done in “a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public.”

Approximately 8 out of 10 babies born in La Crosse County are breastfed initially. Breastfeeding rates are shown to drop once mothers return to work and many mothers return to work during the three months after birth. With the many benefits to mother, infant, and employer, breastfeeding continuation should be protected and supported in the workplace from a social, health, and economic standpoint. Additionally, the expression of breast milk in the workplace is now protected by federal law.

Given the substantial presence of mothers in the workforce, there is a strong need to establish lactation support in the workplace. With a population of roughly 113,000 people, La Crosse County has two major medical institutions, educational institutions, and a wide array of service and manufacturing businesses. La Crosse area businesses can benefit from the creation of lactation support programs in several ways:

1. Breastfeeding employees miss work less often.

Breastfed babies are healthier and therefore parents of breastfed infants miss less work in order to care for a sick infant. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) finds that human milk feeding decreases the severity and likelihood of acquiring many infectious diseases, while women experience many beneficial health outcomes, as well.

2. Breastfeeding lowers health care costs.

The AAP finds that breastfeeding decreases annual health care costs and therefore decreases insurance costs for businesses. Lowered medical insurance claims for businesses means money saved.

3. Lactation support in the workplace can have positive impacts.

Breastfeeding support in the workplace can lead to greater retention of experienced employees while reducing turnover rates, attract future employees with a breastfeeding-friendly work environment, and create a more positive image for the company. Additionally, employees whose companies provide breastfeeding support consistently report improved morale, better job satisfaction, higher productivity, greater parental peace of mind, and decreased stress.

What is a Lactation Support Program?

As a relatively new phenomenon beginning in the late 1980s, **workplace lactation support programs** are defined as planned health promotion opportunities which provide lactating employees with educational and environmental support for the continuance of breastfeeding while returning to the workforce. The program curriculum and service opportunities are at the discretion of the employer and might include lactation services such as prenatal classes on how to breastfeed a baby and maintain breastfeeding after returning to work, support from nurses or lactation counselors, return-to-work consultations, and access to lactation facilities. The importance of these programs is to increase awareness among all employees about the importance of breastfeeding in the workplace and reduce barriers to breastfeeding among employees who have recently given birth in order to ease the transition back to work.

Expressing milk or breastfeeding is imperative during the workday for a nursing mother, as mothers usually need to express milk every couple hours. In the past, and sometimes still the case today, nursing mothers had to resort to expressing milk in bathroom stalls, stairwells, and vehicles. With current legislation, workplaces are required by law to provide employees with a lactation room or private area. Through the development of a lactation program, employees will be able to pump and store their breast milk at work in order to take it home to their infants at the end of the workday.

A lactation support program is a win-win situation. It benefits employers by making it easier for new mothers to return to work by giving them the peace of mind that they can still provide ideal nutrition for their infants and continue to reach their breastfeeding goals. Most importantly it benefits infants, who are often covered as dependents under the employer health plan, by giving them a healthy start in life.

A breastfeeding-friendly workplace environment includes encouraging and supporting employee breastfeeding goals and fostering an accommodating

An overview of the steps to take...

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING A LSP:

Needs & Capacity Assessment → Research of LSPs & Strategy Planning → Program Development → Program Implementation → Program Tracking and Evaluation

Breastfeeding support in the workplace can come in different forms. Every workplace has different needs, varying resources, and diverse workforces. A business does not have to provide their employees with a state of the art breastfeeding facility, rather a private, sanitary location where mothers can express milk comfortably. Two local businesses that actively advocate for the health and satisfaction of their workforce, and therefore offer lactation support for their employees, are highlighted below:

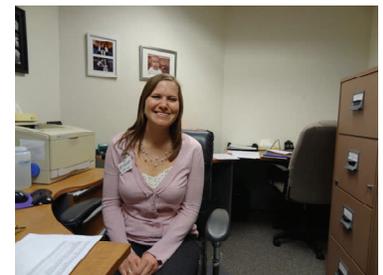
Leadership at **Onalaska Care Center (OCC)**, part of Bethany St. Joseph Corporation, believe in supporting the new mother in her return to work. Located in Onalaska, OCC is a skilled nursing facility which employs 162 people — with the vast majority being female. Although there is no formal breastfeeding policy, department heads keep track of employee breaks and hours spent pumping during the workday. Onalaska Care Center makes temporary accommodations, which can range from time allowed to travel home to breastfeed to pumping at work, based on need for every employee who chooses to continue to breastfeed after returning to work.

Sarah Rank, Human Resources Representative, serves as a resource for employees in terms of breastfeeding support and education. Although OCC does not have a specific lactation room, Sarah offers her private office for employees to pump. Onalaska Care Center is fortunate to have staff who feel passionate about breastfeeding and who make sure every mother who wants to continue breastfeeding is able to do so in a supportive and understanding environment.

Logistics Health Incorporated (LHI), a La Crosse business which provides health care services for government and business customers, formalized their lactation support program in 2010 with a written breastfeeding policy that is included in their employee handbook and several impressive lactation facilities to serve their over 800 employees. A strong promoter of employee wellness, LHI allows employees to take flexible pumping breaks which are approved by managers. The modern lactation facilities at LHI are high tech and include a refrigerator, a sink, a private bathroom, lighting with dimming features, and attractive, welcoming décor. Logistics Health sets the bar high for lactation support and has a firm commitment to providing a more comfortable, private setting for their LHI families.

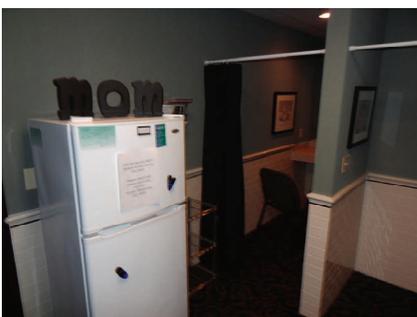
Businesses large and small can provide breastfeeding support. In the pages that follow, planning and implementing a lactation support program will be discussed.

Here are two businesses who make breastfeeding support a priority for their workplace and employees



“Breastfeeding support in the workplace is about doing what is natural and what is important to me.”

-Sarah Rank



LHI Lactation facilities



LHI Lactation facilities

Starting a Lactation Support Program

One of the first steps for starting up a lactation support program (LSP) at a workplace is assessing the need and interest in such a program. Figuring out what type of support you can offer your employees and how to go about it should be considered initially. Key stakeholders might include women of childbearing age, management staff, and representative from Human Resources. It would be beneficial to perform a **needs and capacity assessment** which identifies the reported needs of your workforce and helps direct your goals and objectives while taking into consideration the actual and potential resources of your workplace. Typically, a small planning group is set up comprised of business leaders, such as HR representatives, and interested employees. After gathering and reviewing some resource information, a brief needs and capacity assessment can be planned and implemented. A simple start can be with conducting a key informant interview process.

Assess your need and interest!

Some needs and capacity assessment questions to consider:

- What are you currently doing to accommodate your employees' needs in terms of lactation support?
- What is your physical environment? Are there any barriers to consider?
- How do your employees, managers, and stakeholders perceive the need for a LSP?
- Do different job functions have different access to or needs for services?
- Is there policy in place? If so, what aspects of the policy need to be improved?
- How will you measure success?

Lactation support requires few resources:

1. Privacy to express milk

(a private office or space)

2. Flexible breaks/work options

(time needed to express milk)

3. Education

(employer-provided information and resources are accessible and given to employee)

4. Support

(positive, accepting attitude from all employees and upper management)

Define your goals!

Results from your needs and capacity assessment can be used to formulate your goals and objectives.

Examples:

- Create a lactation area that meets necessary and desired criteria.
- Develop a written breastfeeding policy that outlines expectations and allowances.

Planning

With the guidance from your goals and objectives, you can develop an action plan. Lactation support programs can be developed without a **formal policy**, however, a policy ensures the continuation of the program after the program leaders are not involved in it. A policy statement might outline exact breaks allowed to breastfeeding mothers and provide a guidance of use for the lactation facility. Lactation policies should be communicated to ALL staff to ensure employee awareness and concurrence. Planning of a LSP can be done by an individual or by the planning committee and should be tailored to the needs and capacities of the organization.

Support services that could be included in a LSP might be breastfeeding classes, breastfeeding counseling and discussion groups, return to work consultations between employees and their managers, or even providing breast pumps. Communication between employees and their managers before the return to work is necessary in order for both parties to understand what is to be expected. This may ease the mother's mind about pumping at work and help clarify work time and breaks for milk expression for the employer.

The establishment of a **lactation room** or area is crucial for the success of a LSP. Lactation rooms provide a comfortable place for mothers to pump their milk in privacy. A safe environment allows mothers to relax for more efficient milk expression. Basic lactation rooms can be created with little space and can be as elaborate or simple as desired. Restrooms are unsanitary, usually lack



LHI Lactation facilities

appropriate electrical connections, and do not provide a comfortable space for breast milk expression. If space is not available, consider vacant or unused offices or conference rooms that can be locked to ensure privacy.



What should you include in your lactation room?

- . Private, sanitary setting
- . Electrical outlet for breast pump
- . Adequate lighting
- . Table & comfortable chair
- . Appropriate hand washing & cleaning supplies

Ideally...

- . Centrally located and near a sink
- . Refrigerator
- . Separate temperature control
- . Attractive décor

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING A LSP:

Needs & Capacity Assessment > Research of LSPs & Strategy
Planning > **Program Development** > Program Implementation >
Program Tracking and Evaluation

Development

While planning your lactation support program, it is advantageous to communicate the goals and importance for lactation support programs so that all employees understand the importance and legality of the issue. You may choose to announce your progress to your workforce in announcements or company newsletters so that all employees are aware of what is to come.

You might opt to set up a launch date for your lactation support program so that all employees are notified of when it is to begin. The program planners could give a speech about how your company planned your specific LSP and what is to be expected as a result of it. If you develop a written policy, it should be distributed and explained to all employees. You could also incorporate your LSP launch with World Breastfeeding Week, which is the first week of August.

- 1. Plan a coordinated approach to announce and promote the program*
- 2. Inform department heads and supervisors about the program*
- 3. Provide brief training about the program to employees*

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING A LSP:

Needs & Capacity Assessment > Research of LSPs & Strategy Planning > Program Development > **Program Implementation** > Program Tracking and Evaluation

Maintaining Interest & Support

Make monitoring and maintaining the program a designated element of an employee's job description.

To retain interest and ensure long-term success of your LSP program, continued promotion for the program is necessary. This might include working with human resources to identify pregnant employees, advertising the program throughout the company via promotional flyers or on the company website, and reminding employees about the policy program and how to use it.

Because your lactation facilities will not be used by all employees, and at times might be used less frequently or more frequently, individuals might lose sight of the importance of the program and the support it provides. There are different factors which may influence the use of the LSP, related to breastfeeding rates of employees, employee composition, and number of new mothers, to name a few.

Because of the discrete nature of breastfeeding, co-workers may not notice that your lactation facility is being used as often as it is. This is why it is important to promote the importance and need for such a facility to all workers.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING A LSP:

Needs & Capacity Assessment > Research of LSPs & Strategy Planning > Program Development > Program Implementation > **Program Tracking and Evaluation**

Program Tracking & Evaluation

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Tracking and Evaluation

Evaluating your LSP:

- *Establish a feedback system for breastfeeding employees, co-workers, and supervisors in order to gain ongoing input*
- *Communicate with supervisors and managers regarding the impact of the LSP*
- *Review company absenteeism and turnover rates periodically to track potential LSP impact*

Hopefully, as your LSP grows you will see more new mothers breastfeeding at your workplace. Your breastfeeding-friendly workplace will help foster a better environment for continued lactation.

Gaining feedback from program participants is always a good idea. This will give you insight into how you can continue your program and what steps need to be taken in order to improve its value. Good communication among employees and LSP administrators and planners contribute to continued success.

You also may choose to evaluate your LSP by tracking the number of employees who pumped at the workplace, tracking the number of uses of the room (this can be as simple as using a sign-in sheet on the door), or by tracking the supplies of the room in order to gauge how much the room is used. If you provide additional breastfeeding support services to your employees, those should be evaluated as well. For instance, return-to-work consultations might be tracked as well as attendance at breastfeeding support classes or discussions.

Overall, continued evaluation and revisions to your program will likely be needed as your workforce expands or changes as time goes on. Your records will help you evaluate what the most effective course of action might be for the future.

Here are the steps covered in this toolkit...

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING A LSP:

Needs & Capacity Assessment → Research of LSPs & Strategy Planning → Program Development → Program Implementation → Program Tracking and Evaluation

READER FEEDBACK

Please read through the following questions and answer to the best of your ability:

General information questions:

1. What is your position/title? _____
2. How many employees does your company have? _____
3. Does your company currently have a lactation support program in place or any sort of breastfeeding support? No____
Yes____, please explain _____
4. Have you used any other community resources to assist in the development of a lactation support program? No____
Yes____, please explain _____
5. Does your business provide direct services to breastfeeding employees? No____ Yes____, please explain_____

6. What would you add or change about this toolkit and why? _____

Toolkit effectiveness:

Please use a Likert scale of 1 = strongly agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = somewhat disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree, when responding to the following questions:

1. The "Breastfeeding Business" toolkit for developing a lactation support program was helpful. 1 2 3 4
2. I found the content of "Breastfeeding Business" relevant and would use this toolkit if I choose to develop a lactation support program. 1 2 3 4
3. I believe starting up a lactation program at my workplace is feasible. 1 2 3 4
4. I think my co-workers and/or employees will be supportive of a lactation support program. 1 2 3 4
5. I would like to discuss lactation support programs further. 1 2 3 4
6. Resources (e.g., time, money, space) are concerns for having a LSP at my workplace. 1 2 3 4

Any additional comments are welcome! _____

The purpose of this toolkit is to help La Crosse area businesses to be in compliance with federal law, as well as assist employers in developing, implementing, and continuing a lactation support program. Hopefully, you found the information useful and informative. Thank you for your feedback! Please return feedback forms to Alexandra Price at the La Crosse County Health Department - Nutrition Division (address on the following page).



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