

# Accommodations & Support

## Support for Breastfeeding Workers

A range of benefits can result from support for breastfeeding workers. Supports include:

- writing corporate policies to support breastfeeding women;
- teaching employees about breastfeeding;
- providing designated private space for breastfeeding or expressing milk;
- allowing flexible scheduling during work;
- providing high-quality breast pumps;
- and offering professional lactation management services and support.

Other policies outlined throughout this report also help to support breastfeeding workers, including giving workers flextime and paid parental leave; and providing on-site or near-site child care.

Benefits to Employers <sup>50</sup>	Benefits to Children <sup>51</sup>	Benefits to Parents/Families
<p>Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</p> <p>Provides a three to one return on investment, largely from health care costs savings</p> <p>Reduces employee absenteeism</p>	<p>Reduces infant mortality</p> <p>Breastfeeding lowers children's risk of ear infections, respiratory infections, diarrhea, dermatitis, gastrointestinal disorders, asthma (young children), obesity, certain childhood cancers, and types 1 and 2 diabetes</p> <p>Increases parent-child bonding</p> <p>May increase IQ</p> <p>Reduces doctor and hospital visits</p>	<p>Breastfeeding lowers mother's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes<sup>52</sup></p> <p>Improves family economic security<sup>53</sup></p>

## Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Association of Family Physicians and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists **recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and breastfeeding with complementary foods through at least the first year.** All three recommend that breastfeeding continue as long as mutually desired by mother and child.

Under the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act, **employers must provide workers with a private place to pump milk that is not a bathroom.** Employers must also provide break time to pump. The law does not require employers to have a dedicated, permanent lactation space or provide payment for pumping breaks.



In *The Business Case for Breastfeeding: Steps for Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite*, the US Department of Health outlines four ways to support women who are breastfeeding while working.<sup>54</sup>

- **Offer privacy to express milk.** If a permanent, dedicated lactation room or a private office is not available, a small, private space can be set up for a temporary lactation room. Women who are breastfeeding must express milk approximately every three hours to maintain a healthy supply for their infant, relieve discomfort and prevent mastitis, an infection in the breast. Milk must be stored in a refrigerator or cooler. In addition, electrical outlets should be readily available. Employees should never be asked to express milk or breastfeed in a restroom.
- **Provide flexible breaks.** Pumping sessions usually take around 20 minutes plus time to get to and from the lactation room. Breastfeeding employees typically need no more than an hour per work day to express milk. If milk expression takes longer than expected, which can happen for a variety of reasons, many employers allow employees the flexibility to come in early or stay late, or to use a portion of their lunch period to make up time.

- **Offer education and expert guidance.** Providing breastfeeding employees with access to resources and a lactation consultant can help them feel more prepared to breastfeed and allow them to address any issues they have while trying to initiate or continue breastfeeding.
- **Provide ongoing support.** Supportive policies that enable women to successfully breastfeed while working send a message to all employees that breastfeeding is valued. Leaders should encourage supervisors to work with breastfeeding employees in making reasonable accommodations to help them reach their breastfeeding goals. Management should encourage other employees to exhibit a positive, accepting attitude.

Approximately **34 percent of Kansas employers have a dedicated lactation room.**<sup>55</sup>



# Breastfeeding Workers Face Lack of Workplace Support, Stigma, Career Worries

Lack of workplace support for breastfeeding employees leads them to face stigma about their choice, worries about career opportunities, and the pressure to stop before they're ready, leading to possible negative health consequences for both mothers and babies.

**9 in 10** women in Kansas breastfeed their infants at birth  
**BUT ONLY 25%** breastfeed exclusively for  
the first six month of their baby's life

WHICH IS RECOMMENDED BY MAJOR MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS <sup>56</sup>

Approximately 60% of US mothers stop breastfeeding earlier than they would like.

A top reason is lack of workplace supports such as schedule flexibility or accommodations to pump and store milk, along with concerns about support from employers and colleagues.<sup>57</sup> In a 2018 survey of more than 700 expecting mothers,<sup>58</sup> 62 percent said they believe there's a stigma associated with mothers who breastfeed at work.

**49%** said they are worried that breastfeeding could affect their career growth.

Low-wage women are more likely to return to work earlier and to be engaged in jobs that make it more challenging for them to continue breastfeeding.<sup>59</sup>

More than 1 in 3 women surveyed said they've had a negative interaction with a coworker because of breastfeeding and pumping.

**And nearly HALF of moms said they've considered a job or career change because of their need to pump or breastfeed at work.**



# Pregnant Worker Accommodations

Pregnant worker accommodations are work adjustments such as more frequent breaks or light carry duty that allow pregnant women to do their jobs safely, without jeopardizing their health or the health of their babies.

Benefits to Employers	Benefits to Children	Benefits to Parents/Families
<p>Increases productivity</p> <p>Provides benefit to employee at no- or low-cost to employer</p> <p>Improves recruitment</p> <p>Increases retention, reducing turnover costs</p> <p>Reduces employee absenteeism</p> <p>Reduces health care costs</p> <p>Reduces litigation costs</p> <p>Increases diversity</p> <p>Increases safety</p> <p>Increases employee commitment and satisfaction</p>	<p>Improves unborn baby's health and safety, including lower risk of preterm birth, low birthweight or miscarriage</p>	<p>Improves mother's health and safety and lowers risk for miscarriage</p> <p>Improves family economic security</p>

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## Research or Recommendations from National Organizations

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists:

- It is **generally safe for a woman with an uncomplicated pregnancy to work** without adverse health effects to themselves or their infant.<sup>61</sup>
- There is a slight to moderate **increased risk of miscarriage for women who do extensive lifting** for their jobs.<sup>62</sup>
- Accommodations may be needed for women who are exposed to toxins such as pesticides and heavy metals, or in jobs that have an increased risk of falls or injuries.<sup>63</sup>
- **Women with complicated or high-risk pregnancies also may need accommodations** for the health of themselves or their infant.<sup>64</sup>

Most often, women need minor accommodations during work to protect their health while pregnant, according to a national survey of more than 1,000 US women who have given birth.<sup>65</sup>

The survey, conducted by Childbirth Connection program of the National Partnership for Women and Families, found that:

- Seventy-one percent of women surveyed said they needed **more frequent breaks** during their pregnancy.
- Sixty-one percent of those surveyed said they needed a **schedule modification or time off to obtain critical health care**.
- A **change in job duties**, such as less lifting or more sitting, was needed by 53 percent of women surveyed.
- And 40 percent said they needed some other type of workplace adjustment as a result of a pregnancy-related condition.
- Pregnant women who hold part-time, lower-wage, lower-skilled or more physically demanding jobs are more likely to need some kind of minor accommodation at work. When requests for adjustments are denied, **low-wage workers are more likely to be forced to choose between their job and the health of themselves or their child**.

## Range of Practices in the United States

The federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act prohibits workplace discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and requires that employers **treat pregnant women the same as other employees who receive accommodations for health-related reasons.** For example, an employer that provides light duty to other employees cannot deny light duty to a pregnant worker.

The federal Pregnant Workers Fairness Act requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide “reasonable accommodations” to a worker’s known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless the accommodation will cause the employer an “undue hardship.”

Reasonable accommodations could include light duty, breaks, or a stool to sit on, and accommodations for breastfeeding employees.



## SAMPLE POLICIES

### Support for Breastfeeding Workers

Sample Workplace Lactation Template Policy: [https://owh-wh-d9-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/\\_documents/2023/bcfb\\_policy-for-supporting-breastfeeding-employees.pdf](https://owh-wh-d9-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/_documents/2023/bcfb_policy-for-supporting-breastfeeding-employees.pdf)

### Pregnant Worker Accommodations

Model Pregnancy Accommodation Policy for Employers: <https://www.pregnantatwork.org/model-pregnancy-accommodation-policy/>





Lactation room for City of Derby employees

## CASE STUDY

### City of Derby

The City of Derby received the Gold Level “Breastfeeding Employees Support Award” from the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition and its Business Case for Breastfeeding program. The award is based on proven and established standards to benefit employers and employees. It recognizes businesses that provide support services to their breastfeeding employees, to include education as well as the time and space for employees to express breast milk while at work.

Jenny Turner, Director of Human Resources for the City of Derby, says,

*“The City of Derby proactively works to be an employer of choice and recognizes that supporting breastfeeding mothers is not only required by law but also instrumental in helping breastfeeding mothers balance their work/life demands. Since 2014, we’ve had a procedure in place that provides supervisors and employees information on the support we provide to breastfeeding mothers. We designated space for breastfeeding mothers to ensure a supportive environment and provided flexibility in work schedules for all our employees, including those who are breastfeeding. We currently have private rooms set up at City Hall and at our Police and Courts building for breastfeeding mothers. Each room is equipped with a comfortable chair, side table, and mini-refrigerator. We’ve received positive feedback from our breastfeeding mothers who often return to work more quickly due to the flexibility and support they receive.”*