

The Business Case for Breastfeeding



Employee Lactation Support Program: Small Investment Yields Big Return

Loudoun County Government, Department of Human Resources
Lactation Support Program
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Lactation Support Programs: Small Investment Yields Big Return

What is a Lactation Support Program (LSP)?

1. **Privacy to Express Milk:** If women do not work in a private office, a small, private space (as small as 4' x 5') can be set up for a lactation room. Employees should never be asked to express milk or breastfeed in a restroom.
2. **Flexible Breaks:** Milk expression sessions usually take around 15 minutes, plus time to get to and from the lactation room, and are needed about every 3-4 hours. Breastfeeding employees typically need no more than an hour per work day to express milk, which can easily be divided between usual paid breaks and the meal period.
3. **Education:** Employees value information they receive during their pregnancy about continuing to breastfeed upon returning to work. Pamphlets, resources, access to classes, and access to a lactation consultant can help employees feel more prepared.
4. **Support:** Supportive policies and practices that enable women to successfully return to work and breastfeed send a message to all employees that breastfeeding is valued. Support is a temporary need for each breastfeeding employee – once babies begin eating solid foods at 6 months, milk expression requirements gradually diminish.



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Why is breastfeeding support important for employees and your business?

- A. Improved Health for Mom and Baby:** Breastfeeding significantly reduces disease and illness for both mother and baby.
- B. Businesses can help Moms breastfeed longer:** In 2011, the Surgeon General's Report showed evidence that businesses that support breastfeeding allow women to provide their babies with breast milk for a longer duration.
- C. Workplaces with lactation support programs (LSPs) see a 3:1 return on investment:**
 - ✓ Lower absenteeism—for both moms and dads (less children's illness)
 - ✓ Increased productivity
 - ✓ Higher morale
 - ✓ Higher retention rates
 - ✓ Increased savings in health care claims (Over \$1200/person)
 - ✓ Lower insurance costs
 - ✓ Less prescriptions dispensed

What is the current law?

- A. Federal Law:** Section 4207 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 2011 provides two major provisions to encourage mothers to achieve their breastfeeding goals: (1) reasonable break time to express milk and (2) health insurance benefits to defray the costs.
- B. Virginia State Law:** HJ 145 (2002) Encourages employers to recognize the benefits of breastfeeding and to provide unpaid break time and appropriate space for employees to breastfeed or express milk.



Loudoun County Lactation Support Program

1. Loudoun County Policy for Supporting Breastfeeding Employees
2. Employee Information/Education - to be included in informational brochure/portal for expecting and new mothers

Human resource and supervisor support for creating a plan to return to work and pump if mother would like to do so. Meeting with HR liaison after employee submits a return to work and prior to returning to create a plan with supervisor for pumping breaks.

Time and space for pumping room needs to be private, clean, not a bathroom and have access to a sink and fridge if possible. Signs for privacy if temporary use of space. Government building has permanent room on the 4th floor.

Health insurance benefits cover lactation visits, education, breast pumps and supplies