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## WHY MOTHER-FRIENDLY?

The goal of the Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite program is to provide guidance and tools for worksites to assess, develop, implement, and evaluate lactation support policies, programs, and environments that are responsive to the needs of breastfeeding employees and their families, feasible and sustainable for employers, and beneficial for the health of Texans.

*Participation in the Mother-Friendly Worksite program provides employers with access to:*

- Guidance for proven methods to develop effective worksite lactation support policies and programs.
- Toolkits, templates, and other relevant tools for worksite assessment, policy and program planning, implementation, promotion, and evaluation.
- Guidance to address federal requirements related to breastfeeding employees.

*Why provide worksite lactation support?*

Breastfeeding mothers produce milk on a constant basis to meet the nutritional needs of their infants. In order for mothers to maintain breastfeeding when they return to work, they must be able to express milk during the workday. If they are unable to express milk, the consequences include embarrassing leaking, discomfort and pain, risk of infection, diminished milk supply, and eventually, early termination of breastfeeding.

Combining work and breastfeeding is a leading barrier to breastfeeding initiation, continuation, and exclusivity. Most working mothers report they are unable to meet their own breastfeeding goals. The U.S. Surgeon General urges communities at every level, from within the family to the workplace, to develop environments that remove barriers to mothers' achievement of their breastfeeding goals.

*What do employees need?*

Support for breastfeeding mothers is short-term, cost-effective, easily managed, and usually requires minimal physical and/or operational changes for employers. Mothers only need adequate time (usually 20 to 30 minutes every two to three hours) and a private, clean place, other than a bathroom, to express milk during the workday. They also need a supportive work

environment that allows them to confidently make use of these provisions while continuing to fulfill their commitment to their work responsibilities.

### *What are the benefits?*

Worksite lactation support programs result in:

#### **Significant benefits to families**

- Babies are able to continue breastfeeding, resulting in reduced occurrence of preventable ear infections, severe lower respiratory infections, sudden infant death syndrome, gastrointestinal illness, leukemia, diabetes, asthma, and obesity.
- Women are able to continue to breastfeed, resulting in achievement of personal breastfeeding goals and reduced lifetime risk of breast and ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.
- Maintenance of health and balance between work and family responsibilities results in reduced stress and increased household stability.
- Household finances are protected against unnecessary expenses, such as lost wages for excess workdays missed due to a child's illness, excess medical bills and prescription costs, and excess food costs from purchasing breastmilk substitutes.

#### **Significant benefits to employers**

- Increased retention of experienced employees results in cost savings due to reduced turnover.
- As employee stress decreases, productivity, morale, and loyalty increase.
- Mothers and fathers take less sick time because of children's illnesses.
- Employees and their dependents have lower health-care and prescription costs.
- Businesses see up to a \$3 return for every \$1 invested in worksite lactation programs.
- Access to continued breastfeeding for employees improves health outcomes and reduces health disparities.

All Texans have the potential to benefit from increased worksite lactation support through reduced workforce turnover, improved workforce productivity, reduced health-care costs, and improved public health outcomes.