



# Breastfeeding Friendly Health Departments (BFHD)

BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH THE 10 STEP PROCESS

**Step 9:**  
Select businesses each year and provide worksite lactation support training.

## Support of Breastfeeding in the Workplace is Critical

Returning to work is an important transition for breastfeeding women. Many choose to quit breastfeeding upon returning to work because of the challenges to safely and comfortably express milk in the workplace. But when worksites support breastfeeding, many of the barriers can be overcome. Because breast milk is the optimal food for babies, both state and federal laws have been established to provide lactation support in the workplace\*.

Many employers are often unaware of the benefits to their business and their employees. Local public health professionals can play an important role in raising awareness of the accommodation laws, benefits to employers and employees.

\*See tip sheet # 3 on Step 7 for more information about the Federal and Minnesota Laws Support Breastfeeding.

## Resources

- <http://www.health.ri.gov/awards/breastfeedingfriendly/>
- <http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/ship-fs-ww-nursingmothers-2011.pdf>
- <http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/ship-fs-policydraftingchlist-2010.pdf>
- <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding> (search "business case for breastfeeding")

## Breastfeeding Support in Worksites

Helping worksites to become breastfeeding friendly can happen through supporting advocates and through building relationships with local business organizations like the local Chamber of Commerce. By establishing an ongoing relationship, the health department can increase support for breastfeeding moms as they return to work. Public Health can become the go-to organization that provides resources, materials and training for businesses to have supportive policies and programs for breastfeeding moms in their workplace.

## Public Health Professionals Can Make a Difference

In Pine County Minnesota, it certainly did for a young mom working at McDonalds restaurant. With the help of local public health staff, they advocated for breastfeeding support from the regional office of McDonalds. The employer provided space and created a breastfeeding friendly policy that included breastfeeding education for staff and a disciplinary plan for anyone teasing or harassing others about breastfeeding. As a result, the young mother and two co-workers started using the lactation room regularly.

## Five Action Steps:



1. Learn the basic elements of state & federal laws.
2. Develop relationships with business organizations (local Chamber of Commerce and worksites in your area).
3. Develop training appropriate for worksites in your community that address benefits for worksites and families, support for nursing mothers, leave time and scheduling, and a place to express milk in accordance with state statute.
4. Provide annual trainings for local employers.
5. Recognize worksites that attend trainings and take the steps to become breastfeeding friendly.

## Think S-T-E-P when implementing Step 9



**Support:** from supervisors, colleagues and employer

**Time:** leave after birth, flexible scheduling, lactation during work time

**Education:** for moms and dads and supervisors about the benefits of breastfeeding and the worksite policy

**Place:** private space to express milk

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Breastfeeding Friendly Health Department  
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