

## Tools for Recognizing Breastfeeding Friendly Worksites

Thank you for being a Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Outreach Partner! Missouri's goal is to encourage businesses across the state to become "Breastfeeding Friendly Worksites" and learn how breastfeeding is **good for employees, good for babies and good for business.**

The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) welcomes the support of health-related groups—including local health agencies, coalitions, associations and community based organizations—in raising awareness about the importance of breastfeeding and the benefits of worksite lactation support. This toolkit provides the resources needed to provide education about the benefits of worksite lactation support and how to implement the Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite program.

Efforts to increase worksite lactation support will help employees achieve their breastfeeding goals, ultimately leading to healthier communities. Outreach engagement with the community will also benefit your organization by increasing its visibility and impact as well as fostering new relationships and partnerships. Strategic relationships in your community will increase your reach and support for future endeavors.



Adapted with permission from the Texas Department of State Health Services Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite Program Outreach Partner Toolkit (2011). Available: <http://www.texasmotherfriendly.org/outreach-partner-toolkit>

### ***Why Worksite Lactation Support?***

We know that over 70 percent of new Missouri mothers initiate breastfeeding immediately after birth. That number decreases dramatically at 1 month and 3 months respectively. Employment has been identified as a barrier to breastfeeding duration, but relatively easy supports can be put in place to help new mothers reach their breastfeeding goals when returning to work. Learn more about the benefits of worksite lactation support at

<http://www.health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/breastfeeding/support.php>.

8.5 out of 10 women return to work when there are worksite breastfeeding support services compared to 6 out of 10 women when no services are offered

### ***How You Can Help***

You can use your knowledge of the local community to identify ways to engage organizations and employers. Goals for outreach efforts are to:

- Raise awareness of worksite barriers to breastfeeding and how they affect your community.
- Demonstrate how lactation support programs help breastfeeding employees achieve their breastfeeding goals, positively impact public health and benefit employers' bottom lines.
- Share information about worksite lactation support resources, such as the Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Program and designation.

### ***Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Program***

The Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Program recognizes employers that provide support to their breastfeeding employees. Employers are evaluated based on criteria for three levels of support: Gold, Silver and Bronze. After submitting an application to DHSS, businesses will receive a framed certificate and window clings to inform employees and visitors about their designation. Recognized businesses will also be listed on the Missouri Breastfeeding Coalition's website. Applications can be downloaded from the DHSS website at <http://www.health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/breastfeeding/support.php>. Additional outreach materials are also available online and through the DHSS literature warehouse.



### **Outreach Materials Available**

1. Employer Letter Template
2. Program Brochure

3. Recognition Application with criteria for recognition as a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite
4. Window Cling for businesses receiving recognition
5. Worksite Posters
6. Door Hanger for breastfeeding moms
7. Sample Elevator Speech
8. Sample Press Release
9. Sample Employee Survey
10. PowerPoint Presentation

### ***Local Level Recognition***

Some local organizations may have already established a local breastfeeding friendly worksite award. Business can receive the state and local awards as long as they meet all required criteria.

Presenting a business with their award provides an opportunity to promote the business and the program. If recognizing a single business, it may be appropriate to present the award at the business. If recognizing multiple businesses, a central location would be more practical. Ideas for where to gather include: the local hospital, public health agency, chamber of commerce or WIC clinic. Ideally, a representative from the business and an employee that has benefited from the company policy should be invited to attend. Consider asking one of the employed mothers or an employer to make some remarks about the program. It is best to ask well ahead of time if you want someone to speak. Additional information about recognizing breastfeeding friendly worksites is provided in the Outreach Strategies section.

### ***Steps to Success***

#### **1. Engage Your Organization**

The first step to successful community outreach is starting with your own organization. You and your colleagues or team members can discuss worksite lactation support goals within the context of your overarching health-related mission and determine the best strategies for incorporating worksite lactation initiatives.

### ***Implementation Steps***

1. Partner with local breastfeeding advocates
2. Identify local businesses
3. Contact local businesses and provide program materials
4. Provide follow-up and technical assistance as needed
5. Recognize local employers as Breastfeeding Friendly
6. Provide ongoing outreach to local community

Information can be shared with key groups and individuals in the community via formal presentations, meetings with stakeholders, one-to-one conversations or through a simple phone call.

Your team members could become key players who continue to work with you to promote worksite lactation support programs. If people in the group will be ongoing partners, it's crucial that you define the goals for the group, individuals' tasks and responsibilities, and ways in which the group's success will be measured.

## 2. Prepare Your Action Plan

Outline the organizations and potential partners that you'd like to approach to share information about the benefits of worksite lactation support. Action steps to add to your plan might include:

- Develop or refine critical messages that will be directed to local organizations and employers.
- Identify contacts at local business and professional organizations who could be approached to discuss opportunities for speaking engagements or disseminating information.
- Write op-ed letters for local business publications.
- Identify a spokesperson(s) for presentations.
- Determine how you will define success and establishing measures for evaluating your efforts.

## 3. Identify Your Audience

Some employers already have lactation support policies in place and will be interested in learning how they could benefit by becoming a designated Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite. Others will want a step-by-step guide to adopting worksite lactation policies; these employers can be directed to

<http://www.health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/breastfeeding/support.php>.

A good way to get started is to do a survey of employed breastfeeding mothers in your community. Surveys can be distributed through local WIC offices, childbirth classes, breastfeeding support groups, La Leche League groups and hospital OB departments. A sample survey is included in the Resources Section.

Another way to reach employers is to connect with groups that have multiple businesses as members. In many cases, organization leaders will be able to educate other leaders within their own spheres of influence about the benefits of worksite lactation support programs. Your local chamber of commerce will be an excellent resource for information about your business



community, and you can conduct additional research through your existing network of partners and on the internet.

You might consider contacting:

- Health and wellness coalitions, associations and organizations
- Society of Human Resource Managers local affiliates—find local chapters at [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org)
- Professional organizations, such as networking groups, young professionals groups and entrepreneur groups
- Local chambers of commerce, including minority and women’s chambers
- Local business coalitions
- Women-owned business groups
- Industry and trade associations, such as restaurants, grocers, manufacturers, retailers, bankers, occupational health providers, health insurance plans, etc.
- Facilities management organizations
- Local worksite wellness and employee interest groups
- Local service organizations, such as Kiwanis, Rotary, Lion’s or Altrusa Clubs

#### 4. Making Connections

1. **Plan your approach.** After you have compiled a list of businesses, you will have to decide which businesses you will contact. Consider whether the business has a large number of women employees, the type of business, (i.e., factory, healthcare, service, retail, etc.) or the size of the business. Before reaching out to an organization, do your best to understand its values and goals so that you can make the connection between these and the benefits of offering a lactation support program.
2. **Find the right contact.** Determine the person who is best positioned to share information within your target organizations. If it is a large company, you may be contacting the human resources manager, worksite wellness staff or the occupational health nurse. If it is a small business, you will very likely be contacting the general manager or owner.
3. **Reach out.** Send a letter or email requesting the opportunity to make a presentation at an in-person meeting. While drafting the letters, keep in mind the specific interests, organizational culture and goals of the recipient. For instance, an organization that is fighting obesity might be interested in the ways breastfeeding reduces the risk of childhood obesity. An organization focused on cancer might be interested in the ways breastfeeding reduces cancer risks for moms and babies. You can adapt the employer letter in the [Resources Section](#) and send it along with the brochure “Making Your Business a Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite.” Always be sure to include your contact information.



4. **Make the call.** First you will need to introduce yourself with your name and who you are representing. Next, tell them that you are following up on the information sent about the Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Program. When calling, it may help to use a name of someone in the company or other business contact (Ex. Jane Doe thought you would be the best person to talk to about the Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Program...). If they should say no, I am not the right person; ask who is and get their contact information.

You may only have a minute or two to talk, so make the most of it. An “elevator speech” is a good thing to use when making phone calls. An elevator speech is a planned speech that could be given at a moment’s notice in about the same time it takes to go up in an elevator, about 90 seconds. It is so important to take a few minutes and think about what you want to say. Sample questions that will help you develop your elevator speech are included in the [Resources Section](#). End the call by asking for a face-to-face meeting to discuss further how you can help them with this business solution. Even if you are not invited to speak or give a presentation, you can inform business leaders by providing the Breastfeeding Friendly overview brochure.

5. **Plan what you’ll say.** Modify the PowerPoint presentation provided in the toolkit and print handouts or background materials as needed.

**State your case.** You may only have about 15–20 minutes to present your information so your presentation should be clear and concise. Include information about state and local breastfeeding rates if possible and how employment adversely affects duration. Any printed materials provided should be professional looking and limited. Busy employers will probably only glance over anything you give them to read. Below are some key points to include in your presentation.

*Supporting breastfeeding is the right thing to do.* In fact, breastfeeding is the standard for infant feeding and protects infants and children from many significant infectious and chronic diseases. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding through the first year of life and beyond. Breastfeeding through a baby’s first year benefits mom and baby for a lifetime. If a mother chooses to breastfeed, she needs to express breast milk during the workday in order to maintain her milk supply. Many mothers are afraid to speak to their employers about these needs, and many stop breastfeeding altogether soon after returning to work.



*The business case for breastfeeding is compelling.* Worksite lactation support allows mothers to comfortably express and store breast milk when separated from their babies. Employers can reduce turnover, lower recruitment and training costs, cut rates of absenteeism, boost morale and productivity, and reduce healthcare costs. Employers can experience a \$3 return for every \$1 invested in worksite lactation support. Worksite lactation support programs are a low-cost solution with far-reaching benefits.

*Entire communities realize improved health benefits.* Breastfeeding has both immediate and long-term benefits for the health of the community. Babies who are not breastfed are more likely to develop common childhood illnesses like diarrhea and ear infections as well as chronic conditions like type 2 diabetes, asthma and childhood obesity. They are also at greater risk for rare but serious conditions like severe lower respiratory infections, leukemia, necrotizing enterocolitis and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Breastfeeding is also good for moms, lowering their risk for breast and ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions.

6. **Think ahead.** Research the organization and anticipate questions.
7. **Follow up.** After the presentation, follow up with everyone who expressed interest in initiating or expanding their lactation support services or benefits. Refer them to additional resources at <http://www.health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/breastfeeding/support.php>.

### ***Additional Outreach Strategies***

#### **Be a Role Model**

*Be a role model for others — and encourage other organizations to be role models — by adopting a worksite lactation support policy —for their community.* Who doesn't like to be recognized as a leader? Role model businesses provide inspiration for other businesses to adopt their own worksite lactation support programs and achieve Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite designation. Ask them to share their stories about the designation process and let them know about the positive publicity and kudos they may receive from the community at large.

#### **Brown-Bag It**

*Host a brown-bag Lunch & Learn for human resources (HR) representatives.* Even the busiest HR people have to eat lunch! Hosting a Lunch & Learn event is a great way to reach out to multiple organizations to create awareness in your community about the benefits of worksite lactation programs. You might show a brief PowerPoint (a customizable one is available at <http://www.health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/breastfeeding/support.php>) and then open the floor for questions. It would be good to also include representatives from designated Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksites to answer questions, provide real-world advice and further inspire your guests. You could also connect “buddy businesses”

that are at the same point in the process so that they could provide support and advice to each other.

### **Start Talking**

*Ask to speak at events sponsored by organizations that are already reaching out to local businesses.* These might include chamber of commerce meetings, Rotary luncheons, networking events, business development fairs or entrepreneur events. You can ask the chamber of commerce, search online and look through local publications to find advertisements for these types of events. When contacting the event staff, be sure to explain how lactation support programs are beneficial to businesses and the community. Consider asking the audience to help you spread the word about the benefits of breastfeeding friendly policies to other local businesses.



### **Get Healthy**

*Get the support of health care providers and health-related businesses in your area.* Breastfeeding's powerful health benefits for mom and baby can convince health care professionals to be powerful allies. In addition to raising awareness among the employers represented within these groups, you can also help them spread the word to businesses and organizations with whom they work.

### **Go Back to School**

*Approach colleges, high schools and secondary schools to educate them about the benefits of lactation support programs for their employees.* Contact a college's dean of students office or human resources department to discuss ways to support employees in their breastfeeding goals. You could also make a presentation to your local school board or school health advisory committee to educate these community leaders on ways schools can make a positive contribution to the health of both moms and babies.

### **Take It to City Hall**

The benefits of worksite lactation programs are not limited to businesses. Nonprofits and government organizations can benefit as well and can serve as powerful models for their communities. Identify local government officials who contribute to decisions about worksite environments and employee benefits. Set up a meeting to discuss the possibility of implementing a worksite lactation support program at government offices. Also, get the attention of local officials by presenting at city council meetings, committee meetings, etc. Check out the local government website for a calendar of events.

### **Get Noticed**

*Have a media event in the community to recognize businesses that are already Breastfeeding Friendly.* This type of event is a great way to both recognize community champions and



encourage others to apply for Breastfeeding Friendly designation. Persuade the media to attend by explaining that the event will highlight businesses that are giving back to the community and by providing heartwarming stories about families. It never hurts to have some cute babies at the event as well—they make for great photo opportunities! It's also a good idea to invite businesses that have not yet been designated as a Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite (it's a good reason to call back someone with whom you've had an earlier contact). When inviting interested businesses, be sure to communicate what's in it for them, including an opportunity to network with other local businesses and learn about the benefits of designation.

Once your event is complete, consider ways to continue to reach out to the businesses who embraced the Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Program. You could offer your services to teach an onsite class for pregnant employees or host an ongoing support group. You could also provide newsletter articles or publish newsletters that highlight the advantages of lactation support programs, offer tips for employers and employees, identify area resources for breastfeeding help, etc.

### **Be Social**

*Use social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Pinterest to promote Breastfeeding Friendly programs. As social media becomes increasingly popular, you can reach many contacts (and if they share your post, their contacts) with information, inspiration and the power to make a change. Here are a few examples:*

**Facebook:** On your organization's page, post links to articles that promote the benefits of breastfeeding for babies, moms, businesses and public health. Update your personal status to share your activities as an outreach partner and invite people to contact you if they have any questions or want help with the program.

*Sample Facebook Post:* Awesome meeting with a new school that's working on its Breastfeeding Friendly designation. Being a Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite outreach partner is heartwarming AND good for public health.

**Twitter:** Tweet news stories about Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly businesses in your community and their employee satisfaction ratings. Communications such as these will remind your network about your work as an outreach partner, teach them about the benefits of breastfeeding and give them a way to share information about the program with their contacts.

**LinkedIn:** Share articles and resources with colleagues, add under the Summary section of your profile that you are an outreach partner, and post a link to <http://www.health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/breastfeeding/support.php>



***Get Going!***

*Are you ready?* Now that you've seen some exciting ideas for ways you could engage with employers and community organizations, it's a good time to plan your personal approach. Make a list of your goals, timeline and action items. Prioritize using the list of engagement ideas and add ideas of your own.

Thank you again for all of your enthusiasm, effort and support. We count on our outreach partners as powerful allies around the state. Keep us updated on your progress and activities as you connect with businesses and organizations to raise awareness about how employers can make a positive difference by supporting breastfeeding employees. Updates can be sent to Kathy Mertzlufft, State Breastfeeding Coordinator at [kathy.mertzlufft@health.mo.gov](mailto:kathy.mertzlufft@health.mo.gov).

