

Timeline for Implementing a Lactation Support Program



Note: the actual timeframe for implementing a lactation support program varies, and can be much shorter or longer depending on the size of the company and other internal or external factors. The steps to the process, however, are applicable to most companies.

Month 1 Initial Program Planning

Review existing research about the value of a lactation support program. Resources are included in the toolkit for accessing a local breastfeeding coalition or lactation expert.

Talk to other employers who have implemented successful lactation programs.

Identify potential stakeholders within the company and initiate dialogue about the program. Suggestions include Human Resources, worksite wellness coordinator, supervisors and employees.

Contact community resources to identify options for:

- Consultation in establishing the lactation program.
- Formal and informal education for employees.
- Available lactation assistance for breastfeeding employees in the community.
- Acquisition of breast pump equipment and space within facility.

Month 2 Research

Examine your company data related to employee absenteeism and turnover rates, numbers of female workers of childbearing age, maternity leave policies, etc.

Identify employee needs and environmental constraints to breastfeeding within the company (either through a formal needs assessment or through dialogue with pregnant and current or previous breastfeeding employees).

Month 3 Strategy Planning

Convene a stakeholders' meeting with diverse departmental representatives to discuss results of data collected, and to review options for:

- Milk expression break policies; paid or unpaid.
- Constructing, renovating, or converting a designated space in the company into one or more lactation rooms that are private and free from intrusion.
- Breast pump equipment approved for multi-users.
- Storage and handling of human milk; nearby sink and refrigerator.
- Gaining buy-in from other employees.

Establish a mechanism for gathering baseline data that could be used as a comparison for tracking program success.

Month 4 Program Development

Present program strategy to management and appropriate departments to gain approvals and buy-in.
Assign a task force to begin program development.

Begin development of a company-wide breastfeeding support policy or program components, including:

- Finding contractors for facility changes.
- Flexible breaks for milk expression.
- Amenities for the lactation room.
- Lactation consultation services available in the community.
- Educational and promotional materials.
- Complete physical improvements for a lactation room.

Month 4-5 Program Implementation

Plan a coordinated approach to announce and promote the program.

Inform department heads and supervisors about the program.

Provide a brief training orientation about the program with all employees.

Ongoing Program Tracking and Evaluation

Establish a feedback system for breastfeeding employees, co-workers, and supervisors to gain ongoing input into streamlining the program. (sample feedback form included in toolkit)

Communicate with supervisors and managers regarding the impact of the program.

Review company absenteeism and turnover rates periodically to track the potential impact of the program.

