



CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON
PUBLIC HEALTH

Workplace Breastfeeding Support in Clark County

Washington state and federal law support breastfeeding employees. Employers included in these laws are required to make certain accommodations for their employees who are lactating (breastfeeding).

Breastfeeding support is required by law



The *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* (ACA) amended section 7 of the **Fair Labor Standards Act** (FLSA) to address breastfeeding employees.



Expression of Breast Milk in the Workplace - Reasonable Accommodation was signed into law in Washington State April 2019 and applies to **all businesses with 15 or more employees**.

Providing *reasonable accommodation* for the expression of breast milk in the workplace includes providing *time* and *private space* to express breastmilk



Employers must provide reasonable break time for an employee to express milk each time the employee has a need to express milk.

- Break times may be combined with regular or paid breaks.
- Employers must count pumping time for the purpose of determining eligibility for health insurance.
- Accommodation must be provided for 2 years after the child's birth.



Employers must provide a clean, private space free from intrusion; other than a bathroom.

If the business location does not have a space for the employee, the employer shall work with the employee to identify a convenient location and work schedule to accommodate their needs.



Given the importance of breastfeeding on the health of mothers and children, it is critical that we take action to support breastfeeding. Women who choose to breastfeed face numerous barriers – only through the support of family, communities, clinicians, healthcare systems, and employers will we be able to make breastfeeding the easy choice.

Jerome M. Adams, MD, MPH
U.S. Surgeon General



For more information:

www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/breastfeeding-workplace



Breastfeeding is an Investment in Health

Supporting breastfeeding employees is good for employers, parents, and infants.

Benefits Include:



For Employers

Greater employee satisfaction and increased retention of employees.

Employees are less likely to use sick leave and health insurance costs may be lower.



For Parents and Mothers

Breastfed babies are sick less often, so parents do not have to miss work.

Breastfeeding can help lower a mother's risk of serious health issues including:

- Breast cancer
- Ovarian and endometrial cancers
- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure.



For Infants

Infants who are breastfed have reduced risks of:

- Asthma
- Obesity
- Ear and respiratory infections
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Gastrointestinal infections (diarrhea/vomiting)



SNAPSHOT:

Clark County Breastfeeding

58% of new mothers* in Clark County are in the workforce.



1 in 4 (26%) new mothers* in Clark County stop breastfeeding due to going back to school or work.



Clark County mothers with lower household incomes have lower rates of breastfeeding two months after birth.



*New mothers refers to women with births in the past 12 months.

Employers are prohibited from retaliating against pregnant employees who request one of these changes, denying employment opportunities to pregnant employees who are otherwise qualified, or requiring pregnant employees to take leave if an alternative is available. Additionally, pregnant employees with a pregnancy-related disability may have rights in addition to those listed here.