

CHAMPS Webinar Handout:
Workplace Breastfeeding Initiatives in Mississippi
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Personal Disclosure

Contracts with:

- HHS Maternal Child Health Bureau
- HHS Office on Women's Health
- State Departments of Health

Objectives:

1. Name milk expression space solutions for common non-office settings.
2. Identify resources for supporting breastfeeding employees.
3. Identify practices that can improve safety of milk expression areas at work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Profile of Working Women

- Women with children are the fastest growing segment of the work force. Today in the U.S., 71.4% of women with children are in the work force, and 56% of women with infants under the age of one are in the work force. (*DOL, Bureau of Labor Statistics*)
- Studies have shown that up to 60% of women stop breastfeeding sooner than they would like, Half of new mothers say their plans for employment affecting their breastfeeding decisions. (*A Better Balance*.)
- Because breastfeeding rates have been linked to infant mortality rates, this poses grave concerns for health educators to seek solutions to help women continue breastfeeding more exclusively and for longer durations...especially after they return to work.

Common Barriers to Breastfeeding Among Employed Women

- Around 80% of breastfeeding women discontinue breastfeeding within the first month back at work. (*Cardenas 2005*)
- Common challenges include:
 - Short maternity leave
 - Emotional and physical demands
 - Lack of support from family

- Lack of accommodations in the workplace (time and space)
- Lack of support from employer and co-workers
- Emotional challenges include role conflicts, competing demands, fatigue, sadness, and guilt.

Additional Barriers of Low-Wage Earners

For women working in low-wage jobs, additional challenges can make breastfeeding difficult, including:

- Earlier return to work
- Faster return to work among African American mothers
- Job settings that are not conducive to milk expression or breastfeeding
- Childcare concerns
- Lack of job autonomy and flexibility
- Erratic work schedules and nonstandard hours
- Lack of job security; perception that women are replaceable (therefore leading to hesitancy bringing up breastfeeding needs with supervisors)

Job Reality	Low-Wage Earners	Middle Income Workers
Can Take Off to care for Sick Child	24%	54%
Have a say in when to take breaks	33%	57%
Have a say in the start/quitting time	12%	26%

Resources

- U.S. Department of Labor - U.S. Department of Labor - <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/nursing-mothers>
- “Supporting Nursing Moms at Work: Strategies for Employers” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health) with information about various industries; 29 videos included. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/supporting-nursing-moms-work>
- “The Business Case for Breastfeeding” (HHS Maternal and Child Health Bureau). Available at: <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/pregnancyandbeyond/breastfeeding>.
- A Better Balance - “How to Talk with your Boss About Your Pump” - <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/breastfeeding-while-working/>
- Center for Work Life Law - <https://www.worklifelaw.org/>
 - Free Legal Hotline: (415) 703-8276
 - Free Legal Hotline Email: hotline@worklifelaw.org

- Guide for Healthcare Professionals: <https://www.pregnantatwork.org/wp-content/uploads/Breastfeeding-Workplace-Guide-for-Healthcare-providers.pdf>
- New York Department of Health “Making it Work Toolkit” (New York Department of Health) – resources for employers, mothers, family members, and breastfeeding educators. Available at www.breastfeedingpartners.org.
- North Carolina “Work Well North Carolina” at <https://workwellinc.com/NCMakingItWork.php>.
- Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition - “Support for Breastfeeding Employees and Students” at <https://ksbreastfeeding.org/cause/business-case-for-breastfeeding/>.
- Ohio Workplace PLUS Toolkit - www.odh.ohio.gov/breastfeeding - for employees and employers

Safe Lactation Spaces During COVID-19

- Employees should wear masks, wash hands frequently, and use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol at work.
- Practice physical distancing from others and avoid hand shaking.
- Avoid sharing office space to express milk at work.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces touched frequently.
- Clean outside of breast pump with antibacterial wipes and follow CDC guidelines for cleaning pump parts.
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/healthychildcare/infantfeeding/breastpump.html>
- Examine facility ventilation system.
- Resources:
 - CDC Guidance, “Businesses and Workplaces” (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>)
 - CDC booklet, “How to Keep Your Breast Pump Kit Clean” (English and Spanish): www.cdc.gov/healthywater/pdf/hygiene/breast-pump-fact-sheet-p.pdf
 - Ohio Workplace PLUS Toolkit - www.odh.ohio.gov/breastfeeding “Safe Milk Expression Areas during COVID.”
 - Michigan “Pumping at Work: Supporting Lactating #Employees During Coronavirus (COVID-19). <https://mibreastfeeding.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/COVID-19-Workplace-Guidance.pdf>



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<http://www.pinterest.com/cathycarothers/breastfeeding-resources/>

<http://www.pinterest.com/cathycarothers/breastfeeding-resources-workplace/>

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