

Employer Support: Accommodating Breastfeeding Employees

Increase employee retention, lower health care costs, and reduce absenteeism—with one simple, well-timed statement! Sharing “We have a lactation support program, should you need it, for when you return after the birth of your baby” with employees before they go out on maternity can increase employee retention by 50%. Timing is everything!

With 9 out of 10 pregnant women choosing breastfeeding, they will be relieved to hear their employer supports their decision. Employees and job candidates are looking for family-friendly workplaces. Several studies have found employers who support their breastfeeding employees benefit from^{1,2,3}:

- Reduced employee turnover
- Enhanced public image of the employer
- Decreased absenteeism
- Lower health care costs, and employee turnover.



The National Business Group on Health and the Society of Human Resource Management support the following:

Best Practices

- Policy**—in employee handbook or other employee communications
- Space**—available for use to express milk when needed, with a chair, flat surface for a breast pump, and electricity. Cannot be a bathroom.
- Time**—flexible break times, typically 15-20 minutes, to express milk every two to three hours
- Communication**—let employees know before they go out on maternity leave that the company will provide lactation accommodations upon their return.
- Paid Family and Medical Leave**—six weeks or longer of paid leave for parental and non-parental care, in addition to vacation/sick/PTO time.

Survey of Kansas Employers*

Practice	Kansas Employers	You?
Policy —Written Lactation Accommodation Policy, in employee handbook	44%	<input type="checkbox"/>
Space —Lactation Room used only for the purpose of pumping breast milk	34%	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time —Employee can pump breast milk as the need arises (not limited to break/meal times)	84%	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication —Discuss the company’s lactation policy prior to the employee’s maternity leave	48%	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paid Maternity Leave —in addition to vacation/sick/PTO, etc. (includes leave for non-parental care)	5%	<input type="checkbox"/>

*2021 Employer Survey, 154 employers responded

“We value our families and their needs and/or choices in expressing milk for their baby or babies. We think that this would be a great way to continue to show our support to our employees and receive a little recognition for ECKAN because we believe in supporting our employees as well.”

Thor Brown, HR Director, ECKAN

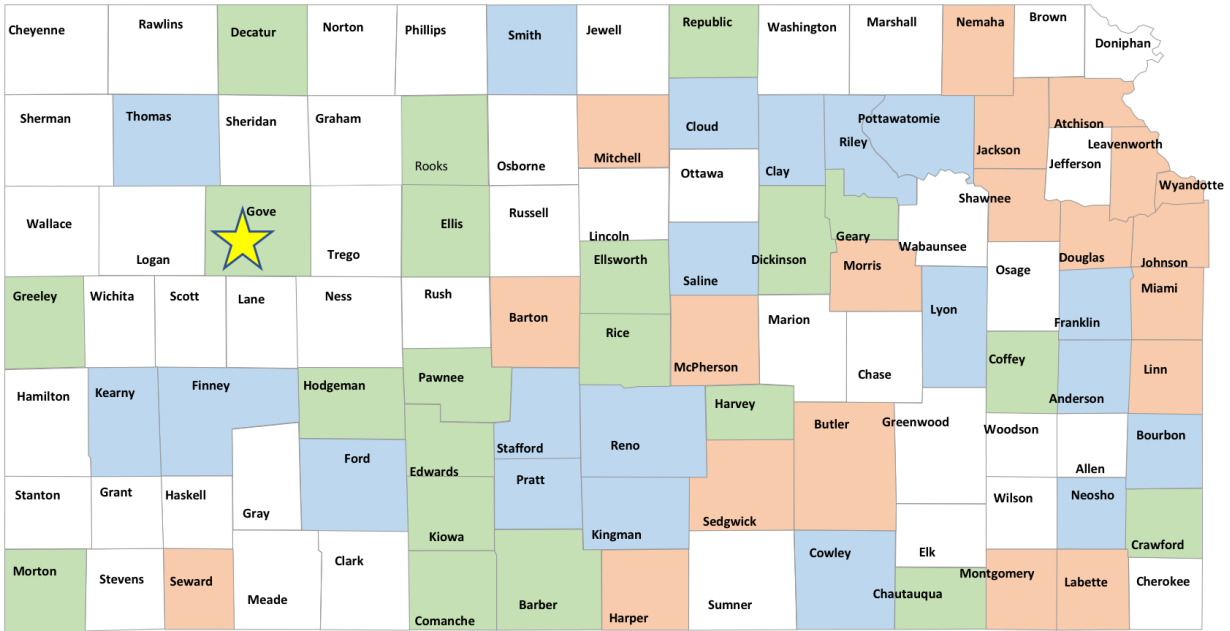
¹Cohen R, Mrtek MB. The impact of two corporate lactation programs on the incidence and duration of breast-feeding by employed mothers. *Am J Health Promot.* 1994;8(6):436-441.

²Bar-Yam NB. Workplace Lactation Support, Part II: Working with the Workplace. *J Hum Lact.* 1998;14(4):321-325.

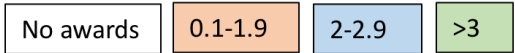
³Mills SP. Workplace lactation programs: a critical element for breastfeeding mothers’ success. *AAOHN J.* 2009;57(6):227-231.

“Breastfeeding Employee Support Award” Employer Awards

Breastfeeding Employee Support Awards by County



of awards/10,000 people



Most awards/10,000 people

[359 total award-winning employers](#)

List of number of [award-winning employers by county](#)

Resources:

- [Kansas Business Case for Breastfeeding](#)
- [CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard Manual](#)
- [Ohio Workplace PLUS Toolkit](#)
- [Making It Work](#) (New York Dept. of Health)
- [Tool Kit - Investigating Workplace Breastfeeding Programs & Policies](#) (National Business Group on Health)

“As the fastest growing school district in the state of Kansas we are building new schools every year or two. So in all of our new facilities we purpose design a space for this and we have retrofitted all of our existing facilities.”

– Phil Elliott, Spring Hill Schools, USD 230



Use the QR code to find more resources for breastfeeding employees and their employers

