Background on Workplace Lactation Support:
The federal government requires employers with 50 or more employees to provide non-exempt employees with reasonable time and a designated space or room to express breast milk for 12 months following childbirth. States may adopt additional provisions. For example, Louisiana passed HB 313 in 2011 to provide suitable accommodations for mothers to express breast milk in 10 state buildings by July 1, 2014.

The U.S. could save $13 billion per year if 90% of mothers breastfed exclusively for the first 6 months of a child’s life.¹

Why Louisiana Needs Workplace Lactation Support:
• Breastfeeding reduces a mother’s risk of breast cancer and an infant’s risk of infant mortality and numerous health problems, such as ear infections, respiratory infections and diseases, gastrointestinal infections and diseases, diabetes and dermatitis. Breastfed infants may also have a decreased risk of becoming obese compared to formula-fed infants.²,³
• Workplace conditions contribute to a mother’s decision to continue breastfeeding. Lack of suitable accommodations to express breast milk or fear of judgment or stigma from supervisors and colleagues may deter working mothers from breastfeeding.⁴
• 50% of Louisiana infants are ever breastfed and only 10% are breast fed exclusively, without supplementation, through 6 months of age.⁵
• Louisiana has the 3rd highest rate of infant mortality in the nation.⁶ Breastfeeding decreases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome.³

Louisiana’s Overall Health Rank, based on America’s Health Rankings: 48th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Indicator</th>
<th>Louisiana’s Rank</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>50th</td>
<td>35% of adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality</td>
<td>48th</td>
<td>8 deaths per 1,000 births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>48th</td>
<td>12% of adults</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of a State Lactation Law:
Texas HB 359 (1995) allows businesses with lactation support policies to be designated as “mother-friendly” workplaces.

Projected Costs:
The basic supplies required for a lactation room include a private space or room with a lockable door, work surface, chair, storage for cleaning supplies and electrical outlet. These materials can be purchased for as little as $145. Other recommended items include a wastebasket, sink with towel, soap dispensers or hand sanitizers and refrigerator to store breast milk.

Next Steps for Louisiana:
Louisiana can continue to support breastfeeding mothers by requiring workplaces to offer suitable accommodations and reasonable time for all employees to breastfeed or express breast milk.
- The Impact -

**Strengths**

- By allowing nursing mothers to express breast milk at work, employers contribute to healthy futures for infants and their mothers. States can improve the health status of more mothers and children by expanding upon the federal provisions or adopting their own unique laws.
- Employers can expect a return of $2 to $3 for every $1 invested in workplace lactation support. Additional benefits include decreases in turnover, absenteeism and medical expenses and increases in productivity and employee morale.
- Lactation support accelerates a mother’s return to work and saves her money on medical claims and formula purchases.

**Barriers**

- Employers may incur additional costs if they choose to build designated lactation rooms instead of using existing spaces or rooms.
- Certain populations do not benefit from the federal workplace lactation law, such as exempt or salaried employees and mothers who want to breastfeed for more than 12 months.

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**Additional research briefs on Louisiana Public Health Strategies can be found at prc.tulane.edu/publications**

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**References**