

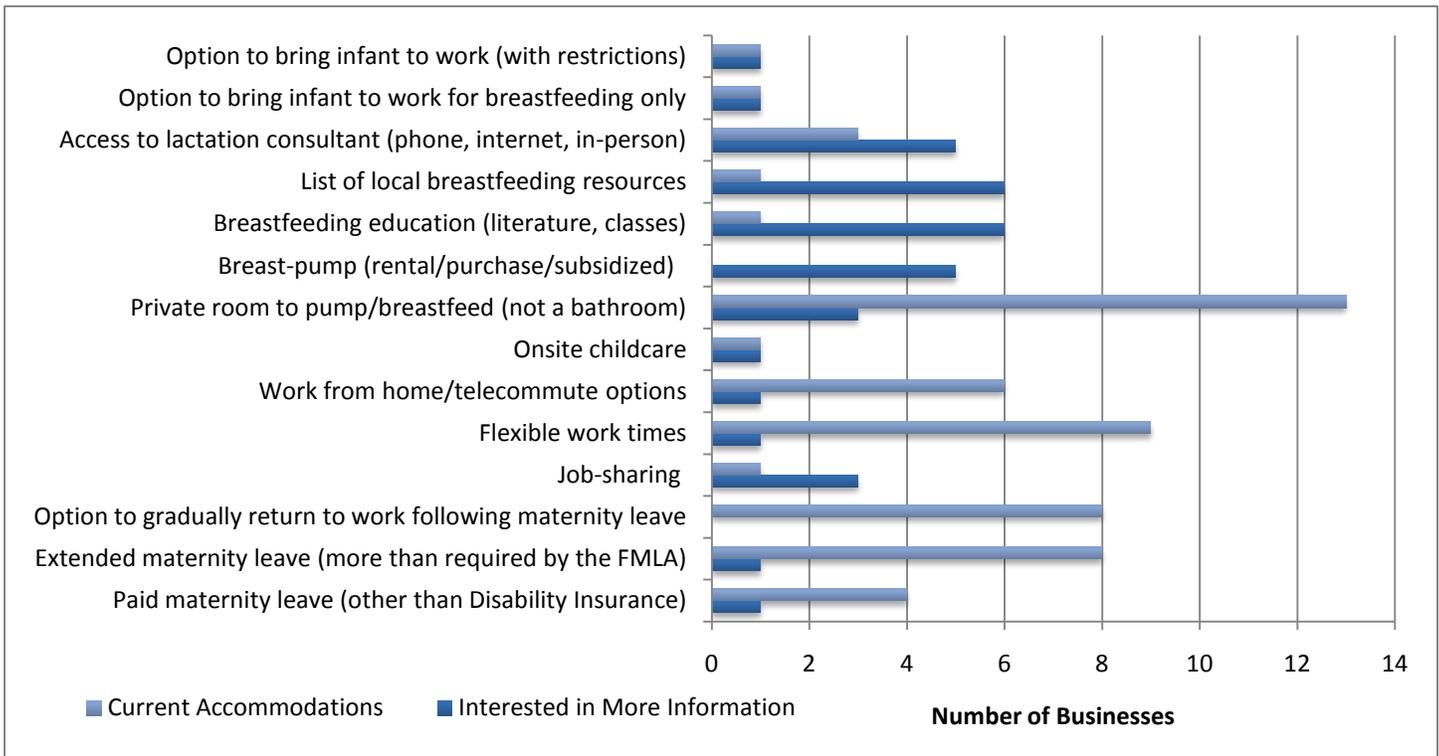


“A survey of workplace breastfeeding support in Sarasota County Florida” addressed the following:

- Are employers in Sarasota County aware of the new federal worksite lactation legislation?
- Do employers in this area currently offer any breastfeeding support services or currently have policies in place?
- Are they interested in making additional accommodations for breastfeeding employees?

Results:

- 90 businesses recruited – 21 participated (23.33% participation rate); poor in general but comparable to other breastfeeding surveys in the workplace. Majority of participants were large businesses (>250 FT employees) with minor participation from medium (250-130 FT employees) and small (<130 FT employees). Participation was too small to draw significant comparisons by industry or size of business.
- Most businesses (85.72%) were aware of the new federal workplace breastfeeding law. Surprisingly two of these were in the healthcare industry.
- A little over half of the businesses had a current breastfeeding policy in place: 23.80% had a written policy while 28.56% had a verbal policy only. Each business who had a policy in place (either written or verbal) had answered positively regarding having an employee who requested a time/place to breastfeed/pump. [*]
- Sarasota businesses were generally well-educated regarding the benefits of breastfeeding and breastfeeding support: reduced absenteeism (88.24%); higher employee retention rates (88.24%); lowers company health care costs (35.29%). However few were aware that the return on investment for breastfeeding support is \$3 for every \$1 spent.
- The majority of participating businesses offered at least some form of breastfeeding support (90.48%). Most common: private room for pumping (72.2%) and flexible work times (55.5%). None offered breast-pump rental/purchase/subsidies. (See table below.)
- There was a high level of interest in more information (42.86%). Most were interested in learning more about breastfeeding and local resources (66.7% each). Additionally, 55.6% were interested in learning about access to lactation consultants and breast-pump rental/purchase/subsidy information. (See table below.)



Conclusions/Recommendations:

- Educate businesses on additional benefits of breastfeeding and support: lowers company healthcare costs and especially return on investment information.
- Provide businesses with information on local resources, classes, how to access lactation support, and how to introduce additional support.
- Encourage employees to approach employers for breastfeeding support and policies – this may be the catalyst that businesses need to provide such services.
- Focus groups may be a better avenue for determining community business breastfeeding support especially if divided by industry or size and may provide a better sample size. This could lead to more industry specific methods for increasing breastfeeding support.
- Follow-up study performed in approximately 5 years to determine the impact of the federal law allowing for sufficient time for a measurable impact.
- Florida currently has no state law relating to breastfeeding in the workplace (23 states and DC have such state laws). This state needs a state law which covers the employees which fall through the holes in the federal law.