

# 10 Steps

## For Breastfeeding Friendly Health Departments



**1** Establish a designated individual/group to manage the following tasks including policy review, development, staff orientation and education:

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- Establish a process for developing, reviewing and modifying policies, procedures and protocols related to breastfeeding practice and environments.
- Ensure staff receive orientation and continuing education on breastfeeding policy implementation and support.
- Complete assessment of community needs for individual breastfeeding promotion and support.
- Initiate a breastfeeding coalition/task force with community and health department membership.

**2** Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely reviewed with department staff and meets the following criteria including addressing all BFHD 10 steps:

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- The public health department has a written policy that addresses all ten steps.
- Indicates all mothers will be referred to appropriate individual support within the community.
- Identifies first point of referral in healthcare provider/community for mothers experiencing common breastfeeding challenges.
- Includes language about support for breastfeeding employees in accordance with state statutes.
- Identifies a process for review by women and their families if requested.

**3** Coordinate breastfeeding support and promotion with other programs in the health department, private and public health care systems, and community organizations to establish breastfeeding as the “norm” in the community:

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- Ensure breastfeeding mothers are given contact information of community-based breastfeeding support groups and individual breastfeeding services.
- Coordinate information and promotion of breastfeeding with other programs, systems and/or organizations.
- Collaborate with partners or coalitions to advocate for support and accommodation of breastfeeding women.

**4** Collaborate with community partners to ensure access to breastfeeding classes for prenatal women:

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- Identify available prenatal breastfeeding classes within the community.
- Identify barriers to accessing classes for any/all populations within the community such as language, cost, and location.
- Work collaboratively with community partners/OB providers to fill the gaps and eliminate the barriers.

**5** Educate the community on breastfeeding support:

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- Increase community awareness by sharing the health department breastfeeding policy.
- Provide basic information on breastfeeding support and management.
- Increase community awareness of breastfeeding friendly messages.

## 6 Encourage racially and ethnically diverse resources within the community:

- Identify racial, socio-economic and minority needs in the community.
- Offer diverse breastfeeding support collaboratively with community partners.

## 7 Support mothers in initiating and maintaining breastfeeding up to twelve months and beyond:

- Educate parents and community partners about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding and the difficulty of reversing the decision not to breastfeed.
- Ensure that mothers know how to access timely support and resources, express their milk, and obtain a breast pump when appropriate, to manage separation from their babies.
- Work with local providers to ensure they are aware of resources that inform them about medication compatibility with breastfeeding.
- Develop a formal referral system for communicating mother's breastfeeding progress to staff as she moves from hospital to community/public health programs.
- Inform mothers of state and federal breastfeeding laws.

## 8 Through community partners encourage local public places to provide a breastfeeding friendly environment for families:

- Work with local public places such as libraries and community centers to provide a private space to breastfeed and/or express milk.
- Encourage the facility to educate staff on acceptable vs. unacceptable behaviors and responses towards breastfeeding women.
- Encourage the facility to display signage identifying it as breastfeeding friendly.

## 9 Select businesses each year to provide workplace lactation support training:

- Discuss benefits of breastfeeding for the workplace.
- Provide sample workplace breastfeeding policy.
- Provide minimum requirements of a lactation room.
- Provide sample materials to be included in an employee breastfeeding packet.
- Honor local breastfeeding friendly worksites through community task force/coalition.

## 10 Facilitate access to information and training for local child care centers or family child care providers on how to support a breastfeeding mother:

- Identify organizational capacity to host training.
- Identify available training for childcare providers in person and online
- Work collaboratively with childcare associations for training dissemination of resources.
- Honor local breastfeeding friendly childcare centers/providers/schools through community task force/coalition.

*The Ten Steps were developed by Bonnie Brueshoff, Director of Public Health in Dakota County, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for her Doctor of Nursing Practice and were created in partnership with ten pilot sites in rural, suburban and urban Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Health.*

Dakota County Public Health Department  
[www.DakotaCounty.us](http://www.DakotaCounty.us) (search "Breastfeeding")



<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/oshii/bf/healthdept.html>

### Resources used in developing the 10 Steps for Breastfeeding Friendly Health Departments:

- Wisconsin Department of Health Services. (2010). *Breastfeeding friendly health departments in Wisconsin* - <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/>
- Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. *The Baby-Friendly Initiative in community health services: A Canadian implementation guide*. Toronto: Breastfeeding Committee for Canada; 2002 <http://breastfeedingcanada.ca/>
- Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute. *Breastfeeding-Friendly ChildCare* - <http://sph.unc.edu/breastfeeding>
- World Health Organization and UNICEF BFHI (1989)

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