



Los Angeles County
DEPARTMENT OF

Human Resources



PPG 705 – LACTATION PROGRAM Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who may participate in the County's Lactation Program?

Any County employee (including full-time, part-time, and temporary employees) may participate in the Lactation Program. The process of requesting and coordinating participation in the Lactation Program is facilitated through the Department's Lactation Coordinator and is the same for all workforce members.

2. What is a reasonable amount of time for a pumping break?

Many lactating individuals have found that they need an average of 15-20 minutes to pump. A pumping break also requires time to set up the pump, undress, pump, store, label, and cool milk; clean pump parts, and dress. Typically, individuals pump every two to three hours or around two to three times per 8-hour work period.

3. What if an employee is taking too much time to pump?

Some employees may require more time to pump than others, especially in the beginning. Pumping time is a protected right, and there isn't a "right amount of time" for pumping. The process of pumping, expressing milk, and lactation is unique to each individual and individual circumstances. For example, it may take longer for lactating individuals to pump because they do not have access to an efficient electric pump. Pumping may take longer if they are hand expressing or using a manual or single-sided pump.

4. Is the County required to pay for lactation breaks?

For covered employees, lactation breaks may be taken concurrently with their paid rest breaks. Any time beyond their regularly scheduled paid rest breaks may be unpaid. Covered employees may use accrued and available benefit time to cover the unpaid break time. Managers, supervisors, and the employee may also agree, based on the needs of service, to adjust the employee's work schedule to cover the unpaid break time.

For employees who do not have accrued benefit time to supplement additional break time, any additional time taken beyond regular break periods is unpaid.

5. Are employees required to use their regular work breaks to express milk?

No. Employees are generally entitled to two paid rest breaks within a regular workday and may use those breaks for lactation purposes, but they are not required to do so. If an employee chooses to use their break to express milk, they may request additional time for lactation if needed. Lactation breaks are not required to run concurrently with regular breaks.

6. Is there a limit to how long an employee may participate in the program?

The County recognizes that experts recommend that babies be breast/chestfed through their first year of life. The ultimate duration that a lactating individual chooses to breast/chestfeed is a personal and individual choice. Thus, the County will continue to support the lactating individual for as long as they choose to continue to express milk. There is no upper limit for how long an individual may request time and space for lactation purposes.

7. If an employee submits a request for lactation, does medical verification need to be submitted?

No. An employee is not required to submit a medical verification regarding the need to express milk. If an employee has a medical condition for which an accommodation other than time and space for lactation is needed, the departmental Disability Management Coordinator and employee will engage in the interactive process.

8. What does it mean for a lactation space, refrigerator, and sink to be “near” an employee’s workspace?

The lactation space, refrigerator, and sink should not be placed so far away that it would be likely to deter a person from exercising their rights. Traveling to a different floor within a building is reasonable; however, an employee should not be required to travel to a space that is more than a five-minute walk. The time that it takes to get to and from the lactation space is not calculated into the employee’s lactation break time.

9. Can lactating employees bring their babies to work and nurse directly?

The law and the County’s policy do not cover bringing a baby to work for direct breast/chestfeeding. However, if an employee is located in a facility that provides on-site childcare, a lactating employee may be able to nurse the child during breaks. Additionally, a covered employee is generally free to leave during a designated meal period. If the baby is brought to the employee, the employee would be free to direct breast/chestfeed during the meal period in any place where a member of the public is allowed to be.

It is also at the discretion of each department to decide on the appropriateness of having an employee’s baby at work, taking into consideration existing County or department policies regarding family visitation at work or building security restrictions.

10. Can an employee leave the worksite and pump in their private vehicles?

Employees who are covered under this policy are permitted to leave the worksite during their lunch break. Employees who are covered and on their rest break are generally restricted to staying within the work area and using the designated lactation space. If identifying an appropriate lactation space is an issue, please contact the DHR Occupational Health and Leave Management Division, Countywide Lactation Program, at LactationProgram@hr.lacounty.gov.