



NEWS



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New Initiative Begins that Recognizes Breastfeeding Friendly Businesses *McLean County Health Department WIC program looking to educate and reward*

BLOOMINGTON – A new program has been put in place by the staff of the Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Education and Supplemental Food Program (WIC). Modeled after a national program organized by the Department of Health and Human Services, WIC's new initiative is looking to recognize businesses for their efforts to be breastfeeding friendly.

Explains Tammy Brooks, WIC program supervisor, "There are several laws on the books in Illinois protecting a mother's right to breastfeed. The [Nursing Mothers in the Workplace Act](#) talks about how in addition to providing break time for employees that need to express milk for their infant children, employers should make reasonable efforts to provide a room or other location, in close proximity to the work area, other than a toilet stall, where an employee can express her milk in privacy. For employers wanting to do more, our Breastfeeding Peer Counselor's can help. If a business requests our help, the peer counselors can provide training and awareness education for employers and their employees."

Businesses participating in WIC's new, [Breastfeeding Friendly Business program](#), are rated on their level of breastfeeding friendliness and awarded a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum certificate, along with a window cling to display at their workplace. Each business is also added to a list of breastfeeding friendly businesses that will be kept as a resource at the health department and posted on the WIC Facebook page.

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The first recipient of a *Breastfeeding Friendly Business* certificate is Fox & Hounds Salon and Day Spa. Both of the owners of the salon, and the manager, have nursed their children and are very supportive of breastfeeding both at home and at work. They will receive a Platinum certificate for their efforts to support breastfeeding and breastfeeding moms in the workplace on Saturday, August 1st, as part of the health department's recognition of World Breastfeeding Week, which takes place August 1 through August 7.

Says Brooks, "We are embracing the theme of World Breastfeeding Week – Breastfeeding and Work: Let's Make It Work! We want to support employers in their efforts to make their businesses friendly for employees and customers who breastfeed, by giving them a certificate of achievement and window cling to display and adding them to our resource list. It's our hope that on their own, or with some assistance from us, employers will move from simply complying with the minimum requirements of the law to truly welcoming the breastfeeding community in their places of business."

Business owners interested in WIC's new initiative can contact the group at 309-888-5457. WIC is a state-wide program that promotes breastfeeding; provides nutritious foods for health, growth and development; encourages regular health care; and promotes food nutrition through education. Nutritious food packages and coupons are provided at no cost to pregnant, postpartum or nursing women; infants and children under five years old who demonstrate a need as determined by WIC guidelines.

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