



SPACE FOR EVERYONE

Communities Supporting Breastfeeding

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



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This document has been adapted and reprinted with permission from:

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- Association pour la santé publique du Québec (ASPQ)
- Mouvement allaitement du Québec (MAQ)

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This guide will help you prepare for your discussions with municipal leaders. The information provides the necessary background to help guide these communities in becoming more breastfeeding-friendly. Further, the presentation and outreach materials are included in the appendix to support your initial and follow up conversations.

Each municipality will be unique, so you may be required to adapt the information or approach to meet the needs of the municipality you address.

Note:

The municipalities who adopt a breastfeeding policy will be posted on the Baby-Friendly Council of Newfoundland and Labrador website: babyfriendlynl.ca.



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PART I - OUTREACH TO MUNICIPALITIES

- You are acting as a representative of the Baby-Friendly Council of NL. This work is linked with the Public Education and Awareness Committee (PEA), which will track the municipalities who have been contacted (provide the information on date and location of your presentation) and who are implementing the toolkit for municipalities.
- Inform and seek approval from your Supervisor about your intention to present at a town council session(s) and to support the municipalities in your region on this project.
- Working with the PEA, identify the town/city you wish to approach with the Breastfeeding-Friendly Toolkit.
- Go to that town's website and follow the procedure to address the town council. If you cannot find it online, please contact the town clerk.
- See Appendix - "Request to Address Your Town/City/Municipality".
- When sending the letter of request (which may be done by email), also include the following from the Breastfeeding-Friendly Toolkit:
 - Infographic
- Following confirmation of the meeting with council, these materials from the Breastfeeding-Friendly Toolkit can be provided in a convenient folder (hard copy) prior to or the day of the meeting:
 - Breastfeeding Window Decal
 - Sample Proclamation
 - Sample Pledge
 - Sample Breastfeeding Policy
 - Photo Sample of Breastfeeding Cut-out Image
 - Your business card or contact information



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PART II - PLANNING YOUR PRESENTATION

PRESENTATION

These speaking points will help with your address to council or any subsequent conversations with officials. Additional speaking points can be found in the PowerPoint Presentation.

- Always address the Mayor and council as per protocol. Contact the town clerk for official designations.
 - Example: Mr./Ms. Mayor / Your Worship
 - Example: Councilor XX (insert last name)
- State your name, official title, and you are representing the Baby-Friendly Council NL who you represent.
- Thank the mayor and council for their time and attention to address the barriers that exist towards breastfeeding in public and how municipalities can benefit from becoming Breastfeeding-Friendly.
- This project of the Baby-Friendly Council of NL is funded by the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development in response to **Action 2.62** in The Way Forward:
In 2017-18, our Government will support municipalities to implement policies and practices that support health outcomes in municipal plans and to implement policies and/or practices to support healthy eating and breastfeeding.
- This project will support individuals and families in achieving their breastfeeding goals. It will also align with and support the following target outlined in The Way Forward document:
By 2025, Newfoundland and Labrador's breastfeeding initiation rate will increase by seven percentage points.
- Breastfeeding is an important way to protect the health of infants, children and feeding parents. In addition to decreasing the risk of many common childhood illnesses, breastfeeding plays an important role in preventing chronic diseases such as childhood obesity, diabetes, and some cancers, which are prevalent in our province. While Newfoundland and Labrador's breastfeeding initiation rate is increasing, rates of infants still breastfed at six months as recommended, fall short of the national average.
- The stigma associated with breastfeeding in public can influence a family's decision to begin and/or continue to breastfeed. Our aim is to normalize breastfeeding in communities including in public settings.



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PowerPoint and Outreach Materials for Town/City Councilors

- How "Communities Benefit" PowerPoint will facilitate your discussion with council.
- The presentation will outline the benefits to families and municipalities and highlight the provincial government's commitment to this initiative.
- Distribute infographic to councilors. Advise additional copies of the toolkit are available upon request.
- Distribute PowerPoint slides (without notes) to support the discussion (If requested for the materials)



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FAQS

Discussion & Frequently Asked Questions

Be prepared to discuss the importance of breastfeeding and why supporting breastfeeding families in the community is important. Anticipate potential questions or barriers to your proposed initiative/request.

Q. Why do we need a breastfeeding Proclamation or Policy? Does it imply our community is not breastfeeding-friendly?

A: It does not imply your community is not breastfeeding-friendly. What it says is regardless of whether a family decides to breastfeed or not, their decision is respected. In current society, barriers to breastfeeding in public exist for many families. In NL, 76% of parents initiate breastfeeding and that rate is increasing but the rates of breastfeeding exclusively to six months and up to 2 years of age and beyond with complementary foods is low. These families need support breastfeeding in their community. By adopting a breastfeeding policy, you are simply formalizing the support for those breastfeeding families (& future families). When a policy is implemented it can help to create a welcoming environment and staff are more informed/educated. Having visible breastfeeding signage posted can lead to that social shift where breastfeeding is more visible. This can be viewed as an appealing feature to recruit families (especially young families) to your municipality.

Q. What about those who tried but couldn't? Or did not breastfeeding? Is a breastfeeding policy non-supportive toward those who do not breastfeed?

A: The Baby-Friendly Council of NL supports the informed decisions parents make to feed their children. This policy is a step to support families who breastfeed as we move back toward a culture of breastfeeding in NL. Our goal is to clarify that the purpose of becoming a Breastfeeding-Friendly community and adopting a breastfeeding policy is to increase the community's awareness of breastfeeding and to reduce barriers or stigma to breastfeeding in public. If a parent wanted to breastfeed but was not successful, I hope they would take some comfort in knowing that their community supports that decision and all families regardless of their feeding method/choice.



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Q. Does the municipality need to create a room just for breastfeeding parents?

A. Not necessarily. However, it is something to consider for new construction or renovations within the municipality. It's important to be aware that breastfeeding is protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which means: parents have the right to breastfeed anytime, anywhere without being disturbed, asked to "cover up" or to move to other areas that are more "discreet". However, *if* a parent asks for a more private area, ensure staff know what options exist, e.g., direct to less busy area; offer empty office space, staff room, cafeteria, conference room; and/or have a privacy screen available (i.e., cardboard divider) at the reception area.

Conclusion & Summary of Presentation

Summary of Request & Presentation Conclusion

- I invite the Town of XXXXX to pledge its support to become a Breastfeeding-Friendly Community (refer to attachments).
- This initiative is about building a partnership with your municipality/community and the Baby-Friendly Council of NL to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.
- As mayor and town councilors, you can support and create an environment where families feel welcome to breastfeed anytime, anywhere. You can spark a positive social change that can impact the health, food security, economics and environment of your community's residents.
- When your municipality commits to becoming breastfeeding-friendly, they will be recognized on the Baby-Friendly NL website and announced on the Baby-Friendly NL Facebook page.
- Discuss a timeline for the Town/City to respond (as appropriate).



PART III - FOLLOW-UP WITH COUNCIL

- Regardless of the outcome, please send a thank-you email or letter to council thanking them for their time and consideration.
- Positive outcome: let them know you are available for consultation (i.e., policy, proclamation or ideas to promote, protect and support a breastfeeding environment).
- Negative outcome: try to find a support personally within the group and maintain contact. Extend an offer to meet with them at another time.
- Advise the Baby-Friendly Council of NL Public Awareness and Education Committee Chairs of the outcome.
- Once a city or town has adopted the pledge or policy, request to the PEA that the information be added to the Baby-Friendly NL webpage and Facebook page.

Future Engagement:

Stay in touch with the municipality and try to build on the support you can provide over time. They may not adopt or use all the materials right away and new supports may be developed in the future. As a Council member in their region, you can be a support person for their breastfeeding-friendly community's efforts long-term. Remind the town/city about events, projects etc. they can participate in (e.g. World Breastfeeding Week) to further support breastfeeding in their community.



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APPENDIX LISTING

- Template letter - Request to Address Town/City
- Municipality Breastfeeding-Friendly Pledge
- Breastfeeding Resolution
- Breastfeeding Policy

TEMPLATE LETTER - REQUEST TO ADDRESS TOWN/CITY.

Note: Where possible, please include a rate from your local healthcare facility in paragraph three.

NAME/TITLE

DATE

Address

Subject: Space for Everyone – Communities Supporting Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the first step in healthy eating. It is important to the health of infants, children and breastfeeding individuals. In addition to decreasing the risk of many common childhood illnesses, breastfeeding plays an important role in addressing chronic diseases like diabetes and some cancers, which are prevalent in our province.

The breastfeeding goal of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and the Baby-Friendly Council of NL is to support families to exclusively breastfeed to six months and to continue breastfeeding with appropriate complementary foods, for up to two years or beyond.

Breastfeeding initiation rates in our province are at 76% (PPNL, 2017). The National average is 89.9% (CCHS 2016-17). There is a wide range of breastfeeding practices in NL communities, but we know more can be done to support breastfeeding families.

Through the Space for Everyone – Communities Supporting Breastfeeding initiative, we would like to invite you to create an environment that supports breastfeeding families by making _(insert Town/City)_ a "Breastfeeding-Friendly Community". This initiative aims to remove barriers around breastfeeding in public spaces.

Included with this letter is a listing of ideas to help create supportive breastfeeding spaces where families feel welcome to breastfeed anytime, anywhere! We are also available to work with you to successfully implement one or all of these options.

As a leader in your community, you can spark a positive social change that can impact the health, economics, and environment of your community's residents. We encourage you and your municipal colleagues to consider taking a step forward in creating a space for everyone. I will follow up with your office in the days ahead to arrange for a time for us to meet and discuss further.

Thank you for your time and consideration and we look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Respectfully,

<<NAME/TITLE / Contact number>>

Baby-Friendly Council of NL





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Here are a few suggestions on how your community can be breastfeeding-friendly:

- Work with the Baby-Friendly Council of NL on what **Space for Everyone – Communities Supporting Breastfeeding** means to <<TOWN/CITY OF XX>>
- Build a work plan with Baby-Friendly Council of NL Members that allows the <<TOWN/CITY OF XX>> to become more breastfeeding-friendly.
- Pledge its support or pass a resolution for <<town/city of XX>> to become a Breastfeeding-Friendly Community;
- Implement a policy for <<town/city of XX>> staff to ensure they are aware of your municipality's commitment to become a Breastfeeding-Friendly Community;
- Display life size cut-outs of breastfeeding parents as a way to normalize this in your community.
- To post "You are Welcome to Breastfeed here" signage throughout your town/city buildings and spaces
- Post "You are Welcome to Breastfeed here" signage throughout your town/city buildings and spaces
- Attend a Baby-Friendly Presentation to increase <<town/city of XX>> staff's ability to protect, promote and support breastfeeding
- Build an ongoing partnership with <<REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY>> and the Baby-Friendly Council of NL to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.



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Municipality Breastfeeding-Friendly Pledge

Pledge

- The community of **(insert name)** will create a supportive environment for our breastfeeding citizens and employees by:
 - Informing all staff that the right to breastfeed anywhere anytime is protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
 - Openly showing support by displaying the Breastfeeding-Friendly signage in our buildings.
 - Providing a place for a breastfeeding individual to breastfeed discreetly, if requested.
 - Offering tangible support to defend the individual's right to breastfeed in public should the person be criticized for doing so.
 - Offering employees sufficient break time to either feed their child or pump their milk.



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Municipality Breastfeeding Resolution

MAKING MUNICIPALITIES MORE BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY

WHEREAS **(name of municipality)** subscribes to an approach focused on the quality of life and well-being of families, health, and sustainable development;

WHEREAS **(name of municipality)** is actively committed to promoting the health, quality of life, and well-being of its citizens;

WHEREAS health professionals, like Health Canada, the Canadian Pediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada, and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, recommend exclusive breastfeeding until six months of age and continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to two years of age and beyond;

WHEREAS offering breastfeeding-friendly living environments contributes to the optimal development of young children and to the well-being of families and society;

WHEREAS breastfeeding in public is a right protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Supreme Court has already ruled in favour of this practice in public places;

WHEREAS parents are still asked all too often not to breastfeed in public places;

It is moved by _____, seconded by _____ and unanimously resolved (or resolved by majority vote) that: **(Name of municipality)** undertakes to:

1. Take a series of measures to facilitate, welcome and protect breastfeeding in municipal public places;
2. Clearly identify municipal public places as environments where parents are free to breastfeed without the obligation to cover up;
3. Set up breastfeeding rooms in public buildings for families who need a place that is comfortable and affords privacy;
4. Implement a pro-breastfeeding policy in all its public places and make it known to managers, employees, and the population (or add measures to an existing policy);
5. Adopt a policy to support nursing employees and make it known to all managers and employees.



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Breastfeeding Policy

Having a breastfeeding policy is an effective way to ensure that all staff are aware that the municipality supports breastfeeding.

(Insert name of municipality) recognizes:

- That the right of breastfeeding anywhere anytime is protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- That breastfeeding is the unequalled way of providing the ideal food for the healthy growth and development of infants and young children;
- That exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, and continued breastfeeding with the addition of appropriate complementary foods for up to two years and beyond, ensures that both breastfeeding individuals and babies receive maximum health benefits;

Therefore, **(insert name of municipality)**:

- Encourages individuals to breastfeed anywhere, anytime they want while in the municipality;
- Offers tangible support to breastfeeding parents so they can comfortably and safely breastfeed in a public place in the municipality;
- Provides a place for individuals to breastfeed discreetly, if requested.
- Supports breastfeeding employees that are back to work after maternity leave by providing sufficient break time and a private space (not a bathroom) to breastfeed or pump breast milk.

Print name, Title

Signature

Date