



As an accredited Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace (BFW) your organisation is displaying leadership by providing a supportive environment for breastfeeding women in your workplace.

Maintaining your BFW accreditation is important

By maintaining BFW standards and consistently communicating the support your employees can access, your organisation is implementing practices that have been identified as being important to the health of all Australians.

Many women return to work when their infant is at an age when breastfeeding is still recommended by health authorities. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life and ongoing breastfeeding until two years and beyond with appropriate introduction of complementary foods¹. The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) also supports this by recommending that infants be exclusively breastfed until six months of age and then continued breastfeeding until 12 months of age and beyond if both mother and infant wish.²

Research consistently shows that breastfeeding is important for the normal growth and development of babies and the health of their mothers. Not breastfeeding increases the risk of many childhood illnesses including gastroenteritis, ear infections, asthma, leukaemia, type 1 diabetes and allergies. Not breastfeeding increases a mother's risk of suffering cancers of the reproductive organs, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and many other illnesses.

Mothers who are not aware that their workplace will support them to combine breastfeeding and work, often feel that their only choice is to stop breastfeeding if they're returning to work, even though they might want to continue. They don't always feel comfortable advocating for themselves and they don't necessarily know exactly what support they need.

BFW accreditation was developed as a direct response to workplaces seeking ABA guidance and recognition of how they could support their breastfeeding employees. The BFW accreditation and reaccreditation standards have been developed by ABA from the life experience of our members, and reflect best practice aimed at meeting the needs of breastfeeding employees.

Annual reaccreditation ensures that accredited BFW organisations continue to meet the current standards and thus continue to meet the needs of their breastfeeding employees. Reaccreditation is also your organisation's opportunity to work with the BFW team to gauge the effectiveness of current practices in your workplace and identify opportunities to improve.

For all these reasons, annual reaccreditation is a requirement for BFW accredited organisations to continue to maintain their accreditation status.

¹ World Health Assembly (Fifty Fourth) 2001, Infant and Young Child Nutrition: Resolution 54.2.

² National Health & Medical Research Council, (2003), Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia incorporating the Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers: 287.

How does the reaccreditation process work?

BFW reaccreditation is a simple and straightforward process and consists of a short survey and a mini audit where the BFW team review only one aspect of your accreditation annually. For example, we might ask to look at your breastfeeding policy one year, then the next year we might do a site inspection of your breastfeeding room, while the following year we would ask to review your communications strategy.

The reaccreditation process is not a big time commitment for your organisation. However it is important as it does ensure that all accredited organisations continue to meet BFW standards.

What are the benefits of BFW accreditation?

Continued accreditation makes good business sense. It enables continued return on your organisation's initial investment and continued value from positive marketing opportunities.

BFW accreditation means your organisation is proudly visible as an employer that takes employee health and support seriously. While this has benefits for both current and future employees, it can also help you meet organisational objectives by:

- Optimising recruitment and retention strategies
- Building your reputation as a family-friendly employer
- Enhancing cost savings associated with a healthier happier workforce
- Demonstrating your commitment to equal opportunity and workplace diversity

You can find out more about how BFW accreditation helps your organisation meet these objectives at www.breastfeeding.asn.au/workplace/employers/benefits

In addition, the ABA is committed to supporting BFW accredited organisations in every way we can. We promote the BFW program and profile accredited organisations at every opportunity. This includes via opportunities in the mainstream media, and also via the following ABA channels:

- ABA website – 2 million website hits per year.
- ABA Facebook page – 75,000+ Facebook followers
- ABA Instagram – 13,300+ followers
- ABA Twitter – 5500+ Twitter followers
- National Breastfeeding Helpline – 88,000+ calls to the Helpline annually
- *Esence* magazine - distributed to approx. 7500 ABA members throughout Australia
- 200+ local ABA community groups that meet across Australia

As an accredited BFW, your organisation will continue to benefit from the positive associations stakeholders have for the BFW logo and endorsement by the ABA.

Also, only accredited organisations have access to a range of exclusive BFW collateral, materials and the BFW logo. See www.breastfeeding.asn.au/workplace/employers/accreditation_inclusions for a full list of exclusive products and benefits that your organisation has access to as an accredited BFW.

Most importantly, the BFW program and the annual reaccreditation process keeps diversity and inclusivity on the agenda at your organisation and has real life applications and tangible benefits to women in your workforce.

The BFW team look forward to working with your organisation during this year's reaccreditation process.