



Evaluating the breastfeeding accommodations of local businesses in Crow Wing County, Minnesota

Danielle Aase¹; Kalsey Stults²;

¹ University of Minnesota; ²Essentia Health



Background

PROBLEM: Initiation and duration of breastfeeding in Brainerd and Crow Wing County, Minnesota.

- Breastfeeding has many benefits for both mother and infant.
- Healthy People 2020 aimed to increase the proportion of infants that are breastfed and set goals to achieve by 2020.¹
- While Brainerd and Crow Wing County met the Healthy People 2020 goal for initiating breastfeeding, their numbers fell far short of the goals at six and twelve months.²

Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration at Three, Six, and Twelve Months in 2017

	Initiated Breastfeeding	Breastfed Three Months	Breastfed Six Months	Breastfed Twelve Months
Healthy People 2020 Goal	81.9%	-	60.6%	34.1%
Brainerd	86.2%*	49.0%	35.1%	15.3%
Crow Wing County	87.5%*	46.7%	31.1%	15.0%
Minnesota	81.3%	48.9%	36.4%	18.7%

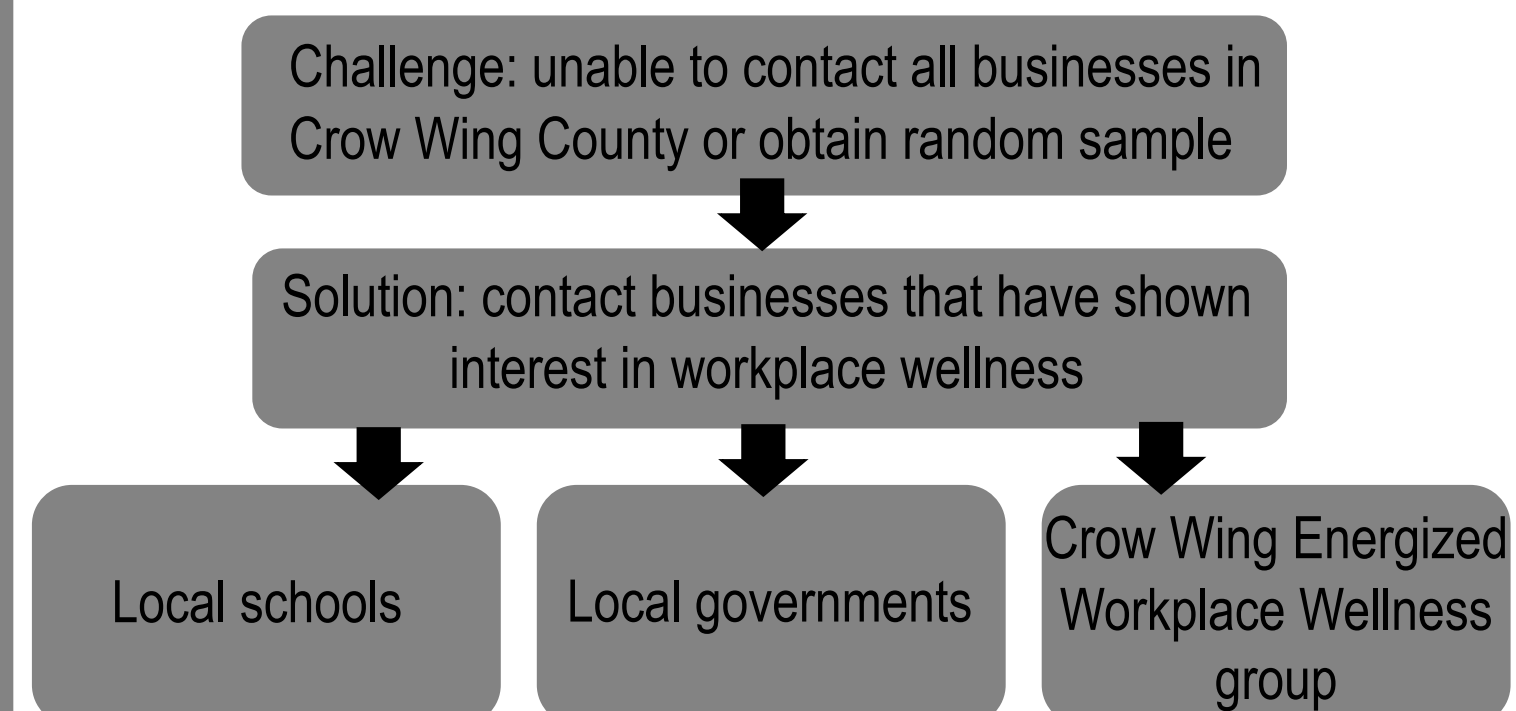
The asterisk (*) indicates percentage meets Healthy People 2020 goal.

- The inconvenience of returning to work and of breastfeeding in the workplace are significant barriers to initiating and maintaining breastfeeding for working mothers. Reasons for this include:
 - inadequate facilities for pumping and storing milk
 - lack of break time
 - lack of support from employers and colleagues³
- Employer support of breastfeeding has been shown to increase the likelihood of breastfeeding after returning to work.⁴

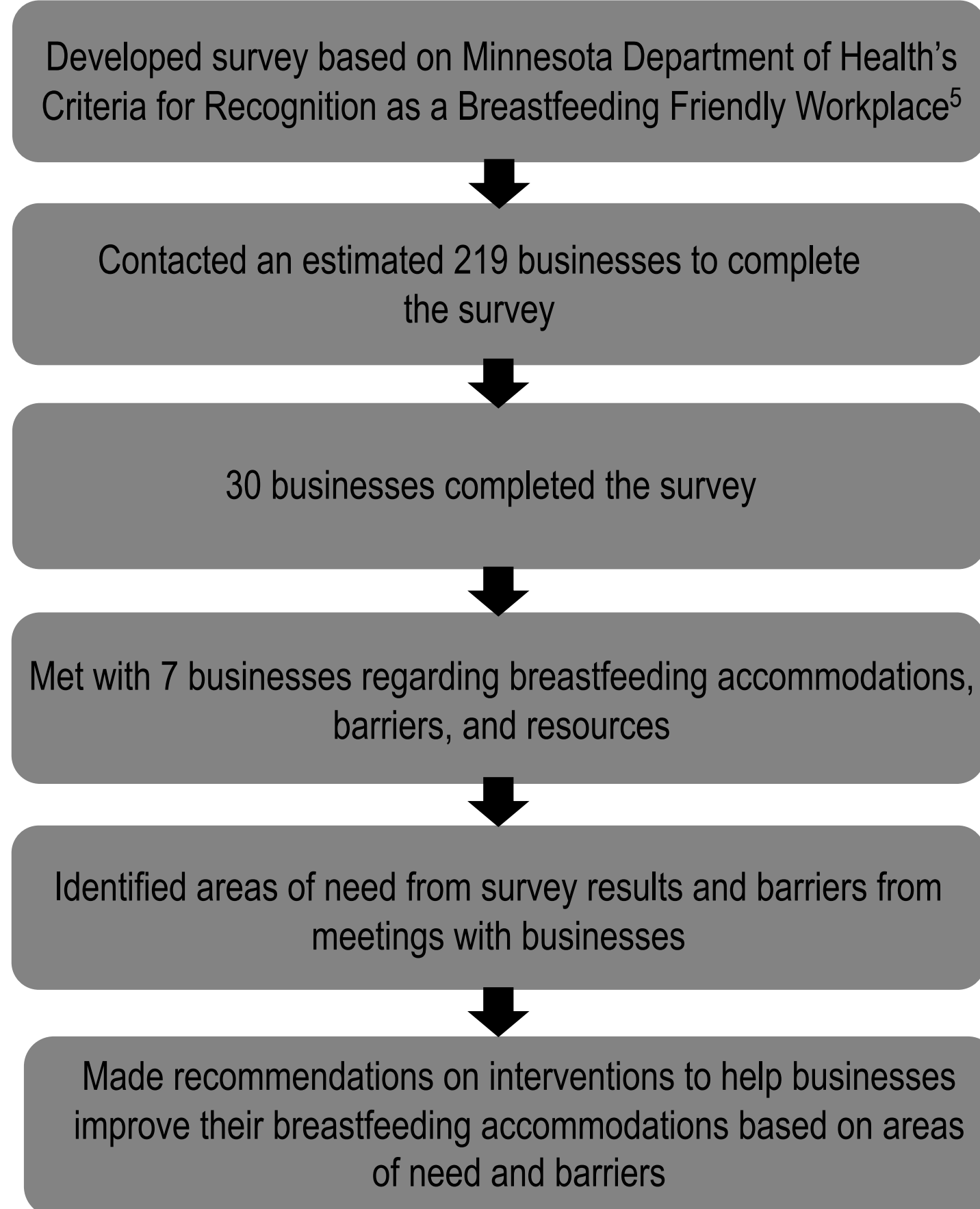
OBJECTIVES

- Survey local businesses to assess breastfeeding accommodations and interest in improving them.
- Meet with local businesses to determine what barriers they face in improving their breastfeeding accommodations.
- Provide educational resources on breastfeeding to local businesses.

Methods: Population Selection



Methods: Project Intervention

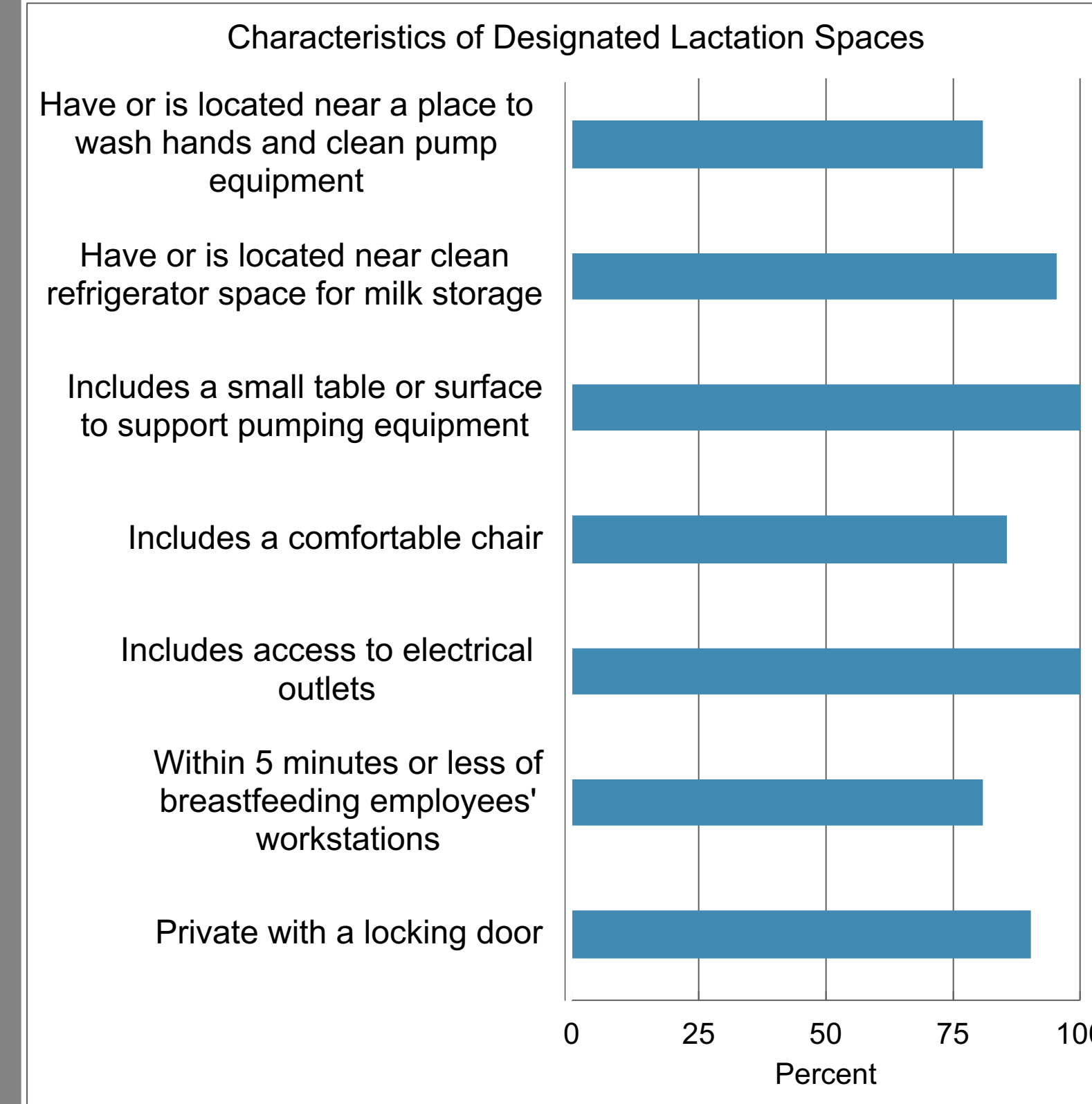


Results

Survey Question	Yes	No	Other
Does your business have a written policy on breastfeeding? If no, skip questions 4 and 5.	33.3%	60.0%	6.7%
If you answered "yes" to question 3, are your employees aware of your written policy on breastfeeding?*	61.1%	22.2%	16.7%
If you answered "yes" to question 3, is information about your policy provided to employees at the time that they request maternity leave?*	55.6%	38.9%	5.6%
Does your business provide work schedule and work pattern flexibility to accommodate reasonable break times for breastfeeding employees to express breast milk or breastfeed as needed?	93.3%	3.3%	3.3%
Are supervisors or other employees in leadership roles trained to support breastfeeding?	50.0%	36.7%	13.3%
Does your business have at least one designated lactation space, other than a bathroom?	56.7%	26.7%	16.7%

The survey questions were based directly on the Minnesota Department of Health's Criteria for Recognition as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.⁵

Results continued



Barriers identified in meetings with businesses	Percent of businesses that identified barrier as a challenge
Lack of funding	28.6% (2/7)
Lack of awareness/knowledge	28.6% (2/7)
Perceived lack of need	42.9% (3/7)
Lack of physical space	57.1% (4/7)
Lack of impetus for change	28.6% (2/7)

Discussion

MAJOR FINDINGS

- Having a written breastfeeding policy does not correlate with having a designated lactation space and vice versa.
- Almost all businesses (93.3%) reported having at least one breastfeeding accommodation.
- Almost all businesses (93.3%) reported that they accommodate breaks to express breastmilk. However, only 33.3% reported having a written breastfeeding policy and 73.3% reported having a space for lactation (56.7% reported a designated space).
- Existing lactation spaces in the community already have most of the necessary features of a designated lactation space as defined by the Minnesota Department of Health.⁵
- The most reported barrier was lack of physical space.

Discussion continued

Interventions based on areas of need		
Areas of need	Example interventions	Resources
Written breastfeeding policy	Assist in development of written policies and standardized communication tools for employers	Womenshealth.gov sample written policy
Designated lactation space	Facilitate discussion between businesses about creative solutions to make space in their buildings	Crow Wing Energized Workplace Wellness group
Interventions based on barriers		
Barriers	Example interventions	Resources
Lack of funding	Advertise grant opportunities	Crow Wing Energized grant
Lack of awareness/knowledge	Assist in development of maternity leave handout with information on employee rights under the law	Minnesota statutes, U.S. Department of Labor
Perceived lack of need	Provide information on the return on investment of supporting breastfeeding employees	Womenshealth.gov Business Case for Breastfeeding
Lack of physical space	Facilitate discussion between businesses about creative solutions to make space in their buildings	Womenshealth.gov location for breaks
Lack of impetus for change	Connect businesses to community resources to assist businesses in implementing changes	North Central Breastfeeding Network

LESSONS LEARNED

- Resources already exist that address local businesses' needs and barriers with regards to breastfeeding accommodations.
- Flexibility and adaptability are key in project implementation.
- A pandemic is a challenging time to implement a project.

NEXT STEPS

- Repeat survey with a larger sample size in order to gather data from and meet with more local businesses.
- Implement targeted interventions to assist businesses with creating a written breastfeeding policy and a designated lactation space.

Acknowledgements

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References

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