Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Laos Workplace Breastfeeding Awards

What is It?

The SUN Laos Workplace Breastfeeding Awards is an annual award that recognizes leading employers and workplaces that champion breastfeeding by their employees. The Award is recognised by the Ministry of Health and is part of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Laos network, which is led by the government and supported by businesses, international donors, civil society, the United Nations and others.

Why should my workplace participate in the Awards?

All workplaces in Lao PDR can participate in the award. By participating, your workplace is demonstrating to its staff and its customers that you value the health and wellbeing of staff and their families. It will increase staff loyalty and satisfaction, and it will build trust with your customers that your workplace has strong values. Most importantly, it will encourage working mothers to breastfeed for longer so that their babies are healthier.

When Is It?

Applications for the Awards are normally submitted between ***May and June each year*** but can be submitted anytime during the year. The Workplace Breastfeeding Awards are given out in August each year as part of World breastfeeding Week celebrations.

How can my workplace participate?

It's easy for all workplaces to participate. Just follow these 3 simple steps:

1. Review your own workplace breastfeeding practices comparing it to the 10 best-practice criteria. It is suggested this is done together by Human Resources and Senior Staff.
2. Fill in the (5-minute) online form (by 30 June 2024).
3. Join the SUN CSA Workplace Breastfeeding Awards during World Breastfeeding Week on 1-7 August 2024 and receive your certificate!

What if I have more questions?

If you have any questions about the Awards or about how to improve your workplace breastfeeding practices, please contact to the SUN CSA Secretariat at info@suncsalaos.org or via the SUN CSA Facebook page. You can also find more information on the SUN Laos Workplace Breastfeeding Awards webpage and at the Breastfeeding Resources webpage.

SUN CSA Workplace Breastfeeding Awards Criteria

Criteria for improving breastfeeding at work and receiving an award:

1. **Adopt a written breastfeeding policy:** This policy should outline the rights of breastfeeding mothers in the workplace, including the right to take breaks to express milk, the right to have access to a private place to express milk, and the right to have access to a refrigerator to store breast milk.
2. **Provide lactation breaks:** Breastfeeding mothers should be given paid breaks to express milk. The length of these breaks should be based on the needs of the mother and her baby.
3. **Provide a private place to express milk or breastfeed:** This place should be clean, comfortable, and private. There should be a refrigerator to store breast milk.
4. **Provide information to pregnant staff and support them to make a breastfeeding plan for returning to work:** If Human Resources or other Senior Staff give specific information to pregnant staff about their rights and supporting them to plan to breastfeed when they return to work, the staff will feel enthusiastic to return to work while breastfeeding. It can help the employer and staff discuss potential challenges and help agree on how to overcome breastfeeding obstacles.
5. **Train managers and supervisors:** Managers and supervisors should be trained on the importance of breastfeeding and the rights of breastfeeding mothers in the workplace. This training should help to ensure that mothers are able to breastfeed successfully while they are working.
6. **Create a supportive work environment:** A supportive work environment is one where breastfeeding mothers feel comfortable expressing milk and taking breaks to do so. This environment can be created by providing education and support to mothers, managers, and supervisors. For example, hang posters in the office.
7. **Offer flexible work arrangements:** Flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible work hours, can help breastfeeding mothers balance their work and family responsibilities.
8. **Provide 6 months maternity leave:** Providing 6-months paid maternity leave will allow breastfeeding staff to focus on exclusive breastfeeding for 6-months, which is crucial for their baby's long-term health.
9. **Limit field travel and pay for a career when travel is needed.**
10. **Offer lactation support:** Lactation support can be provided by a lactation consultant or another qualified professional. This support can help mothers to troubleshoot any problems they may be having with breastfeeding and to ensure that they are able to breastfeed successfully.