



motherhood in america



what do working moms need?

In 2019, a majority of women with a young child are in the labor force, and the total number of women in the workforce has increased significantly over the past 60 years.^{1,2} These women are driving leading companies and organizations forward, but we don't know nearly enough about their motivations, values, and experiences as working mothers.

Ovia Health's Motherhood in America report asked women what they want and value on their journey into motherhood. With 64% of women deciding to leave their job before they have their baby, companies are missing an opportunity to reach a much larger employee population — those who are thinking about starting a family, dealing with infertility, or navigating parenthood — and provide them with essential support from Day 1.

The report finds that there are three low-cost, high-impact strategies that employers — of all shapes and sizes — can adopt now to invest in their long-term success:

1

Flexibility

2

**Benefits Utilization +
Manager Training**

3

**Breastfeeding
Support**



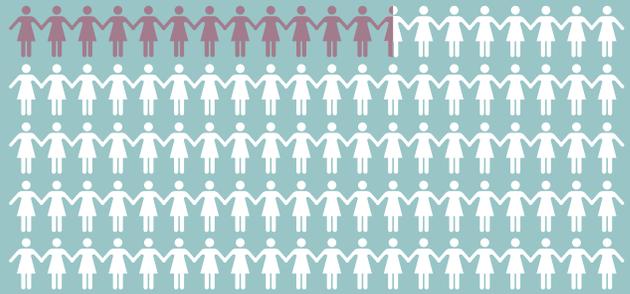
who's telling us their story

Ovia Health surveyed 2,000 Ovia Pregnancy users from across the U.S. The top industries represented in the survey data were (in order): healthcare, education, retail/grocery, and food services. 44% of the respondents worked for an employer with 500+ employees and half (49%) were with their employer for three or more years before giving birth.

34% of women did not return to their job



only 12.5% of women went back to work because they loved their job



what we found — and why it matters

Just over one-third (34%) of women did not return to their job once they had a baby. 11% of those women went back to work for a new employer, and of the women who did return to their job, the majority did it for financial reasons (73%). Only 12.5% of the women who returned to work said that they did so because they loved their job.

This is where the problems lie for today's employers. 83% of millennials would change jobs for one with better benefits.³ This means that working women — and their partners — are a flight-risk: they're open to change and actively pursue it. If employers fail to become family-friendly by making deliberate and thoughtful changes to their policies, practices, and culture, they will lose the top talent they already have and risk undermining the recruitment of new talent.



flexible scheduling

Across women who returned to work, 23% felt unsupported by their employer's postpartum schedule flexibility, and almost half (43%) of women who left their job felt that their employer could have done things differently to keep them in the workforce, such as providing support via flexibility.

77% of women want – and need – flexibility from their employer

43% of women who left their job may have stayed in the workforce if an employer provided flexible scheduling

77% of women cited flexible scheduling (e.g., gradual return to work postpartum, modified hours, consistent breaks, option to work remotely, and the ability to shift hours to accommodate childcare conflicts) as something that they wanted — and needed — from their employers.

Respondents shared examples of ways in which their employers' flexibility made working motherhood possible. One explained that her employer let her “come back part time for nine months” to ease the transition back into the office. Another benefited from short-term flexibility when her employer “provided flexible hours when I didn't [yet] have full time daycare.” Similarly, many women who didn't return to work said that a modified work schedule (“being able to ease into full-time work”) and flexible hours to accommodate childcare would have greatly impacted their decision to remain in the workforce.

Enabling women to work on their own terms can cultivate both efficiency and loyalty — or, in other words, help mitigate a woman's flight-risk.



benefits utilization and manager training

“ I didn’t want to work for a place that didn’t care about the wellbeing of their employees. ”

Only one-fifth (19%) of survey respondents who left their job described their workplace as a “good place for new mothers.” 28.6% of respondents said that they were unsatisfied with their support from employee benefits, and approximately one-third (30%) were dissatisfied with their coaching/guidance about returning to work. 43% of respondents placed top value on employer programming to help navigate the maternal health system.

43% of women placed top value on employer programming to help navigate the maternal health system

Improving communication saves more than feelings: it saves dollars. The cost of a new hire can range up to 200% of the departing employee’s salary.⁴ Managers who are trained to communicate proactively with their employees about the company’s benefits and resources — both before an employee shares news of her pregnancy and afterwards — are showing employees that their wellbeing matters in the workplace. One respondent said that simply learning about her “health insurance and a dependent FSA” helped her stay in the workforce.

“ Another company tried to recruit me away but I’m staying put because I love the benefits at my company. ”



breastfeeding support

“ Others get smoke breaks without having to punch out, and when I had to pump once a day, they made me clock out. ”

70% of respondents wanted better support for breastfeeding and almost one-third (29%) of women who returned to work felt “not at all supported” by their employer’s nursing/lactation facilities. In fact, one respondent said that “they cut my pay for pumping breast milk.”

Breastfeeding a baby is one of the best choices a mother can make for her baby’s health, as well as her own.⁵ Being at work almost always puts physical distance between women and their children, making breastfeeding a logistical challenge. When an employer makes it easier for women to breastfeed, it sends a clear message to all employees that the workplace values both their health and the health of their family.

employer tip

Create a dedicated Mother’s Room, where women can pump (or nurse). The room should be objectively comfortable, private, easy to reserve and have access to electricity. Nursing mothers also need a sink to clean pump pieces, as well as refrigeration for their expressed milk.



investing in family is an investment in the future of your company or health plan

The workforce is changing, and women — and parents — are the future of your company. At any given time, it's likely that over a quarter of a company's employees are either thinking about starting a family, already pregnant, or struggling to balance work and a young family. Simply put, there is no other issue that impacts an organization as profoundly as the challenges associated with how employees build and care for their family. Addressing these issues — which can be as simple as introducing flexible scheduling, manager training, and breastfeeding support — can define companies culture and save millions.

At Ovia Health, we believe that organizations will succeed if they make more woman- and family-centered decisions, and we are proud to partner with leading employers and health plans to help put this change into motion.

To truly make family-friendly workplaces, we need your help. Join us by visiting oviahealth.com to learn more about our work and our personalized maternity benefits solutions.

About Ovia Health

Ovia Health is the most loved and trusted health companion for women and families, and the leading maternity and family benefits solution for employers and health plans. The only clinically validated solution of its kind, Ovia Health helps women and parents grow their families and their careers while reducing healthcare costs, improving clinical outcomes, and helping employers retain and attract talent. Since launching in 2012, Ovia Health has supported over 12 million women and families.

To learn more about Ovia Health,
visit oviahealth.com or
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¹“6 facts about U.S. Moms, Pew Research. 8 May 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/08/facts-about-u-s-mothers>. Accessed 31 May 2019.

²“12 Stats About Working Women | U.S. Department of Labor Blog.” 1 Mar. 2017, <https://blog.dol.gov/2017/03/01/12-stats-about-working-women>. Accessed 15 Sep. 2017.

³“83% of Millennials Would Change Jobs for One With Better Benefits. Care.com” 10 Aug. 2015, <https://www.care.com/press-release-millennials-would-leave-job-for-better-benefits-p1186-q65824324.html>. Accessed 15 Sep. 2017.

⁴“There Are Significant Business Costs to Replacing Employees.” 16 Nov. 2012, <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Cost-of-Turnover.pdf>. Accessed 15 Sep. 2017.

⁵“Breastfeeding - ACOG.” <https://www.acog.org/About-ACOG/ACOG-Departments/Breastfeeding>. Accessed 15 Sep. 2017.