

EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

The Domestic Partner Benefits Revolution

By Tamika Hodnett-Johnston and Allison Mitchell

For years employers have offered benefits to workers, their spouses and children, but as family demographics change many employers have recognized that employees' families may no longer consist of a traditionally married couple with children. Today more than 9,000 companies in the United States offer domestic partnership benefits to their employees. Offering these benefits supports workplace equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, and also provides important supports to cohabiting heterosexual couples and their children.

A domestic partnership is a relationship between people who live together and share a common domestic life, but are not joined in a traditional marriage, common-law marriage or a civil union. Women Work! is proud to partner with several corporations who not only provide domestic partner benefits, but have family-friendly programs, too.

Women Work! celebrates the family-friendly and domestic partnership benefits of Corporate Board of Advisors members Bank of America, JPMorgan Chase, Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance (MassMutual) and Verizon Communications. These companies were each recognized among Working Mother Magazine's 100 Best Companies in 2006.

While providing medical, dental and vision care for its employees and their partners, **Bank of America** also subsidizes childcare for employees working at corporate headquarters. The company supports



Employer provided benefits help employees and their children and loved ones.

parents who choose to adopt by providing up to an \$8,000 reimbursement per child.

Ensuring quality childcare is a priority for **JPMorgan Chase**, who ensures tuition discounts and priority registration at several daycare facility chains across the country. Not only does the bank provide for basic domestic partner benefits such as health-care, they also provide retiree benefits for domestic partners.

MassMutual provides a supportive work environment for new parents by providing

the flexibility to shift their work-day daily. The company also provides options of part-time work, job-sharing and telecommuting from home. Employees can also choose to use on-site childcare, which is provided on a sliding pay scale.

Verizon Communications offers a full benefits package, including health, dental, vision and Family Medical Leave, to all spouses and same-sex partners. These benefits have been in place for over 10 years.

Providing employees and their families with fair compensation, including benefits to reduce stress and sickness, is good for businesses as well. Healthy, happy workers are more productive, and less likely to leave. Many of the programs offered by these corporations, including domestic partnership benefits and allowing flexible work schedules, cost a company little, but provide enormous benefit to the employees and their loved ones. Find out what benefits your employer provides today. ✓

If you are working or looking for employment and want to know more about a company's policies, contact the Human Resources Department and ask:

- Does my company offer **domestic partner benefits**? If so, what are they?
- What is my employer's **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy**?
- Does my company provide **Workplace Diversity training**?
- Does my company have **Employee Resource Groups (ERG)**, also known as affinity groups, or other forums to support employees from diverse backgrounds and help individuals to come together for relationship building and problem-solving?