California law states that “a mother may breastfeed her child in any location, public or private, except the private home or residence of another, where the mother and the child are otherwise authorized to be present.” The law does not require the use of a privacy cover while breastfeeding. While this law refers to “nursing mothers”, the law has generally been interpreted as applying to any breastfeeding person, regardless of whether or not the person identifies as a mother.

Recommendations for how to respond if refused service for breastfeeding or harassed for breastfeeding in public:

1. Take a deep breath.
2. Ask “Are you refusing me service because I am breastfeeding?” or “Are you telling me I must leave because I am breastfeeding?”
3. Give the other person a chance to respond.
4. Immediately document everything that was said.
5. If you are asked to leave or refused service, advise them that under California Law, you have the right to breastfeed in public.
6. Advise the other party that California State Law protects the right to breastfeed in public.
7. Let them know that by refusing service and/or being asked to leave their business, you will be filing a sex discrimination complaint under the Unruh Civil Rights Act. 
   www.leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=CIV&sectionNum=51

If the other party continues to refuse to follow California State Law, see the toolkit section Advocating for Yourself page 47 for ideas about other strategies.